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FROM THE EDITOR

For the first time, the title races in all five of Europe's top leagues were won by the defending champions. A sign of the stagnating times, perhaps, but beneath the top layer of wealthy clubs, some great stories have taken place this season: the likes of Atalanta in Italy (page 30) and Nice in France (page 22) challenging the existing order, as well as new champions in Greece (page 28) and Poland (page 25).

Much has been made of the two main European club cup Finals being contested by four English teams for the first time. Yet it is somewhat pointless to describe clubs as English when the managers and club owners are foreign, and only eight of the 44 starters in the two matches were English.

> Europe's top five leagues were won by the defending champions, but some great stories have still taken place

The obvious counterpoint to that is that the fan bases remain English, making Baku a ridiculous choice of venue for the Europa League Final. Yet I am surely not alone in noting the irony of Chelsea: a club whose success has been paid for by Soviet oil money, winning a Final in Azerbaijan, whose wealth also derives from oil.

We've concentrated on reviewing the European club season in this issue; we will focus on this summer's myriad international tournaments next month. See you then.

Gavin Hamilton, Editor

10 SIGNIFICANT EVENTS THIS MONTH

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3 Liverpool are European champions p34
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8 Paris Saint-Germain claim another French title p42
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10 Juventus claim Serie A crown again p46

Short lived...for a few days, Esperance were African champions

AFRICA

CAF in crisis over Final and Ahmad arrest

Confederation of African Football president Ahmad is facing a mounting crisis after the CAF Champions League Final ended in chaos and he was arrested by French police who are investigation corruption allegations.

Just days before the Africa Cup of Nations was due to kick off in Egypt, CAF officials ordered that the abandoned second leg of the Champions League Final between Esperance and Wydad must be replayed later this summer at a neutral venue.

Just hours after the decision was made at a CAF executive committee meeting in Paris, Ahmad was arrested at the official FIFA Congress hotel. He was later released without charge by French police investigating allegations of a fraudulent kit deal.

FIFA later confirmed it had opened an ethics investigation into Ahmad – who replaced Issa Hayatou as CAF president in 2017 – regarding allegations of financial irregularities and sexual harassment.

"I think we're compatible, but Zidane will decide"

Real Madrid signing Luka Jovic thinks he can play alongside Karim Benzema after his €60m transfer from Eintracht Frankfurt

BRAZIL

Neymar out of Copa, denies rape allegations

Brazil forward Neymar was ruled out of the Copa America after suffering an ankle ligament injury in the first half of Brazil's pre-tournament friendly against Qatar.

"Due to the seriousness of the injury, Neymar will not have the physical conditions and sufficient recovery time to participate in the Copa America," said the Brazilian federation.

Meanwhile, Mastercard refused to deny reports that it had withdrawn Neymar from an advertising campaign that it had planned to run during the Copa. This followed allegations made in an interview with Brazilian SBT TV by a woman who claims Neymar raped her in a hotel room.

Neymar denied the allegation and has said the woman was trying to extort him.

Allegations...Neymar

HEROES & VILLAINS

Charity...Mesut Ozil and his wife

MESUT OZIL

The Arsenal midfielder and his new wife, Amine Gulse, asked their wedding guests to forego the traditional gifts and instead donate to a charity which funds operations for children in developing countries. The gesture paid for 1,000 children around the world to have life-changing surgery.

THE McGINN BROTHERS

John McGinn scored for Aston Villa as they beat Derby County 2-1 in the play-off Final to reach the Premier League, while his elder siblings – Stephen and Paul McGinn – were both in the St Mirren side that ensured the Scottish side's Premiership safety the day before with a penalty shoot-out victory over Dundee United.

KYLIAN MBAPPE

The 20-year-old PSG forward's strike for France in their Euro 2020 qualifying defeat of Andorra was his 100th senior career goal.

Nine...Honduras couldn't handle Erling Braut Haaland

ERLING BRAUT HAALAND

The son of former Manchester City defender Alf Inge scored nine times in Norway's 12-0 rout of Honduras at the Under-20 World Cup.

Belkebla...bare-faced cheek cost him his place

HARIS BELKEBLA

The midfielder was thrown out of Algeria's Africa Cup of Nations squad after exposing his backside in the background of a live stream as a team-mate played Fortnite.

LA LIGA

The Spanish league authorities were fined for not informing users of their mobile app that they were utilising their phone microphones to locate bars illegally screening Liga games.

JACK WARNER

The disgraced ex-CONCACAF president lost his latest appeal against extradition to the USA to face charges of fraud, racketeering and engaging in illegal wire transfers.

TAI NICHOLAS

The former general-secretary of the Oceania Football Confederation was found guilty of misappropriating FIFA funds and offering/accepting gifts or other benefits. He was banned from all football related activity for eight years by FIFA.

Banned... Tai Nicholas

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"Thanks to all those who love me, to all those who hate me. I love everyone today"

FIFA president Gianni Infantino is re-elected "by acclamation"

Adil AOUCHICHE

(Paris Saint-Germain & France)

Holland may have triumphed at the European Under-17 Championship in Ireland but the tournament's top scorer in the finals came from beaten semi-finalists France.

With nine goals, Adil Aouchiche set a new record for the competition and equalled the European tournament best set by compatriot Michel Platini at Euro 84.

On target in all of France's games, bar the defeat to Italy in the semis, the 16-year-old's goals included a hat-trick against Sweden in the group stage and four in the 6-1 quarter-final thrashing of Czech Republic.

The central midfielder, who has Algerian heritage, was courted by Bordeaux, Lyon and Lille but signed for PSG having grown up in Le Blanc-Mesnil, on the northeastern outskirts of Paris.

JOAO PEDRO
(Fluminense)
The teenage striker made a blistering start to his career in Brazil and has already been snapped up by Watford.

Santi CAZORLA
(Villarreal)
The midfielder, whose final days at Arsenal were plagued by injury, earned a recall to the Spain squad at 34.

Matheus HENRIQUE
(Gremio)
The Brazil midfielder impressed at the recent Toulon tournament in France.

FERRO
(Benfica)
Centre-back who many in Portugal think is even better than Ruben Dias.

Diego PALACIOS
(Willem II)
The teenager, who spent last season on loan in Holland, starred in Ecuador's run at the Under-20 World Cup.

Kevin MALCUIT
(Napoli)
The French right-back enjoyed a great first season in Serie A and could now fill a problem position for Didier Deschamps.

Keir RADNEDGE

THE INSIDER

Infantino's African problem

Within hours of Gianni Infantino's re-election as FIFA president, the smile was wiped off his face by the latest farcical twist within CAF.

As Infantino was assuring the world that his new FIFA was as bright and shiny as Jurgen Klopp's teeth, French police were waiting to pounce on African confederation president Ahmad over corruption allegations.

To rewind: Swiss lawyer Infantino was elected in 2016 to serve out the remaining three years of the term to which banned and disgraced Sepp Blatter had been voted in 2015. Infantino had been parachuted in by European federation UEFA after its own president, Michel Platini, had been banned himself over a murky financial deal with Blatter.

Hence Infantino stood for re-election this year in Paris to a first of a possible three four-year term in his own right. He can serve a maximum of three terms, so could be with us all until 2031 if he plays his cards right – and he is a smart operator with canny advisers.

No one challenged Infantino. How could anyone? He had fulfilled the two major promises of his 2016 campaign in expanding the World Cup and ramping up development hand-outs. He had even teased his members with the (never realistic) possibility of 48 teams at the World Cup in Qatar.

The latter issue was kicked out of court by a brief press release shortly before congress at which delegates from FIFA's 211 member nations were left with nothing to do except acclaim Infantino's coronation.

Congress kicked off at 9am and the final whistle was blown at 11.45am. They could not even tease it out until a respectable time for lunch.

This is a flavour of it all. Infantino told congress: "Today nobody talks about crisis. Nobody talks about rebuilding FIFA from scratch. Nobody talks about scandals and corruption. Now we talk about football.

"In three years four months this organisation went from being toxic, almost criminal, to being what it should be: an organisation that develops football, an organisation that cares about football.

"We have transformed FIFA into a new FIFA, an organisation which is synonymous with credibility, trust, integrity, quality, human rights, social commitments, modernity, professionalism."

Infantino has a corporate bearing very different to the Blatter bonhomie. But even he was surprised at how effectively he had seized command.

He told me afterwards: "When I came to FIFA I didn't know what to expect or how fast I could change certain processes. I just rolled up my sleeves and started to work.

"I didn't have much time to look at what we had achieved because you know how difficult the situation was. Now I can say there are a few things of which I'm proud and happy."

But a FIFA president's work is never done. He'll always have Africa.

At 8.30 the following morning French police detained Ahmad at his luxury hotel for questioning in a swoop reminiscent of 2015 when Swiss police executed United States extradition warrants on seven senior officials including two FIFA vice-presidents.

Ahmad, via his CAF status, is also a FIFA vice-president. He was wanted for questioning in relation to a finance and tax investigation into a €1.063million sports kit contract which CAF signed in 2017 with a French company called Tactical Steel.

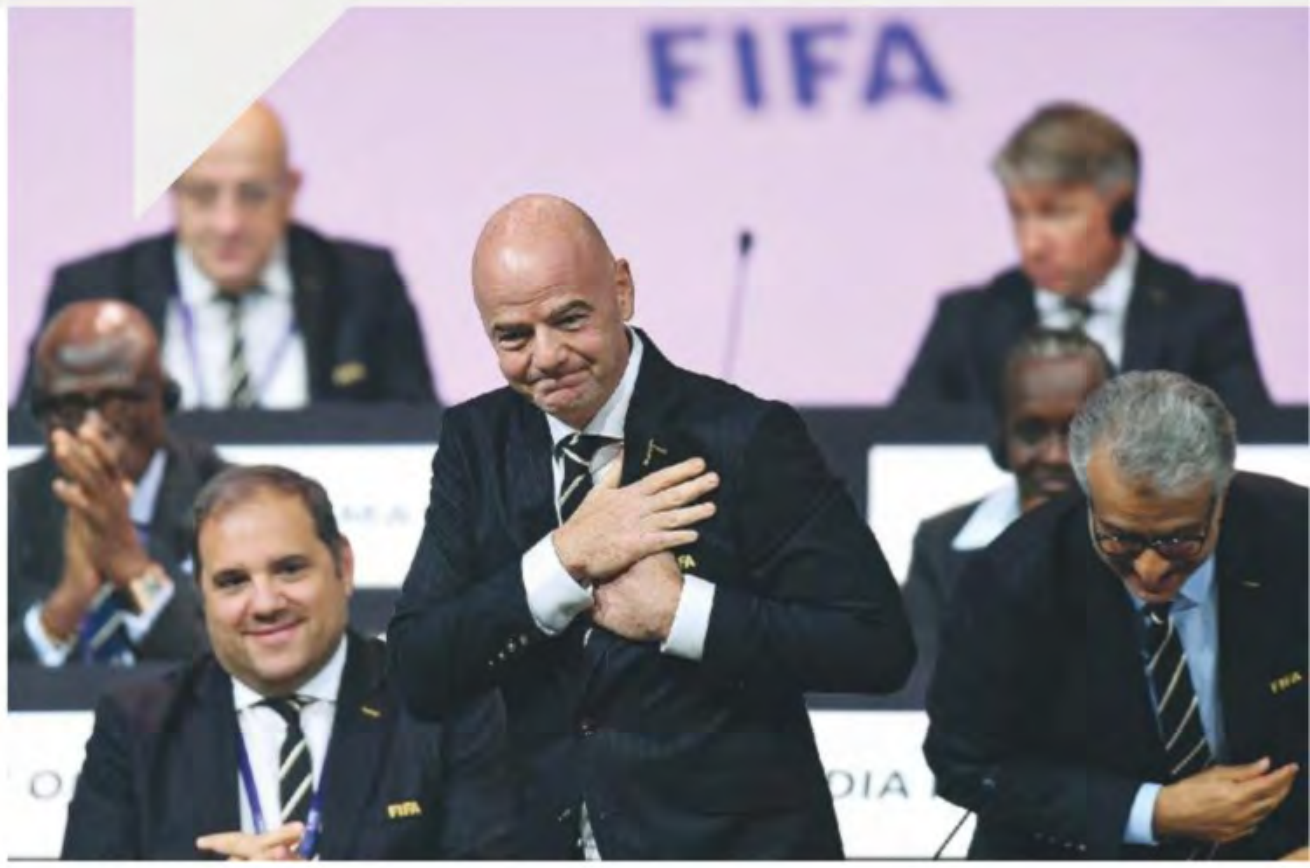
The initial complaint against Ahmad, who surprisingly ousted long-serving Issa Hayatou in 2017, came from Amr Fahmy, then secretary-general of CAF. Ahmad denied any wrongdoing in office. Fahmy was sacked.

Fahmy's complaints against Ahmad also concerned sexual harassment of CAF staff, $400,000 worth of new cars, the financing of a visit to Saudi Arabia plus a sharp increase in personal allowances for FA presidents.

Ahmad was questioned, denied all wrongdoing, was released the same night and flew back to Africa. It is safe to assume he will not be returning to France any time soon.

Ahmad is a delicate issue for

> French police detained Ahmad at his luxury hotel for questioning in a swoop reminiscent of 2015



Re-elected ...Infantino

Problems ...Ahmad

Infantino. It was Ahmad who originally introduced Infantino to UN official Fatma Samoura who became FIFA's first woman secretary-general. It was Ahmad who promoted Infantino's cause within CAF and has been a loyal supporter through numerous controversies.

But his kingdom is more chaotic than ever. At least Issa Hayatou and the Egyptian establishment maintained an appearance of control. Under Ahmad various national FA bosses have been banned for corruption charges and his handling of the CAF Champions League bust-up was a disgrace.

Ahmad has been accused of working to bring Morocco back into power at the expense of Tunisia and Egypt, and these claims were ramped up after Morocco's Wydad were granted a Champions League Final replay against Esperance of Tunisia despite having walked off the pitch in protest at the refereeing.

If CAF were a national association, FIFA could appoint a "normalisation committee" and take over the running of the organisation while new leaders are found. But the confederations, oddly, are not members of FIFA even though they play a significant role in its governance.

Thus African football is stuck out on its own limb, its leadership class either incompetent, incapable or both. Who suffers most? The players. No wonder so many escape to Europe.

For now, none of this will damage Infantino, even though reminders of the bad old days preceded congress.

In Switzerland, former FIFA secretary-general Jerome Valcke lost an appeal to the Swiss Federal Court over his sacking for playing fast and loose with expenses and World Cup tickets; in France former UEFA president Michel Platini chose the eve of congress to whinge to the media about his own downfall. Platini's ban expires in October so it will be interesting to see whether he will seek to return to the game in one way or another.

Not that Infantino will worry about Platini. Not only is he in charge for another four years; if he plays his political cards right he could be there until 2031.

However, sooner or later, he needs to address Africa. WS

BAKU BOTHER
UEFA was unlucky that, having chosen Baku for the Europa League Final, the finalists came from far-away London. Perhaps, in future, FIFA could establish a "reserve panel" of venues to be assessed at the start of the club competitions' knockout stages.

Problems... Europa League Final

WORLD CUP TWIST
China has re-emerged as favourite to win the hosting rights to the 2030 World Cup. FIFA Council sets the bidding rules in October and rotation, which would bar another Asian bid, may be scrapped. That is bad news for the South American quartet (Uruguay, Argentina, Chile and Paraguay) as well as UK and Ireland.

POOR HANDLING
Expect the latest handball ruling from football's lawmakers to fail to resolve disputes. UEFA even produced its own handball interpretation for the Champions League knockout stage. The increasing use of VAR will only exacerbate the issue. How can accidental handball be an offence in the goal area and not in midfield?

REFORMING MUDDLE
Aleksander Ceferin, president of UEFA, looks likely to achieve exactly what he wants from European club competition reform. This is because the European Club Association is hopelessly at odds with itself over the shape of things to come from 2024, with the big clubs and the others wanting very different outcomes.

WINNERS

TS GALAXY
Founded four years ago, they won the South African Cup and now enter the Confederation Cup – the country's first second-tier side to play in a continental tournament.

CHRIS WONDOLOWSKI
Scored all four goals in San Jose Earthquakes' 4-1 win against Chicago Fire to break Landon Donovan's all-time MLS scoring record of 145.

FRANCK RIBERY
The 36-year-old Frenchman leaves Bayern Munich as the only player to have won nine German Bundesliga titles.

LOSERS

GEHAD GRISHA
The Egyptian ref was suspended for six months after his poor performance in the first leg of the CAF Champions League Final.

JEROME VALCKE
Lost an appeal to Switzerland's supreme court against a 10-year FIFA ban, which cost him a total of 38,000 Swiss francs.

ANZHI
The Russian club – who once had Samuel Eto'o, Willian and Roberto Carlos playing for them – failed to gain a licence for Russia's second tier after being relegated from the Premier League.

Paul GARDNER

GLOBAL VIEW

A target too VAR?

Decision...referee Benoit Bastien

Is there something wrong with VAR? I don't mean a quibble or two about the way it operates. I mean the whole idea of this elaborate set-up of additional referees and a bank of monitors that spew out replays at all speeds from all angles.

The target is clear enough: to make sure the referee gets the calls right. Which means we're seeking perfection.

I've never doubted that is a worthy aim and I think that would be true of most football devotees who have seen too many games where a wrong call, thanks to imaging technology, is known to be wrong by all except the ref.

It is an absurdity that had to be corrected. But I am having some second thoughts about this – all centred around the perfection angle.

There is a mass of research that tells us that perfection is not such a good idea. That it is an illusion, a myth. That there is something distinctly sterile about it.

We don't deal with perfection in every day life, we deal with numberless imperfections. And they are rarely boring, they add vitality and drama and humour to life.

On the pitch, there were a dramatic few minutes played out in the recent USA v Nigeria game at the Under-20 World Cup.

With the US leading 2-0, Nigeria got a breakthrough moment in the 64th minute when defender Mark McKenzie clearly fouled Kingsley Michael. Referee Benoit Bastien called the penalty kick immediately and the ball was put on the spot.

As Nigeria's Muhamed Tijani waited to take the kick, Bastien first lectured the US goalkeeper and then warned the other players about encroachment. After almost two minutes of that, VAR rejected the referee's penalty decision and pointed out that Nigeria's Okechukwu Offia had been offside in the build-up – by a matter of millimetres.

The incident delayed the game by two and a half minutes but resulted only in a colossal psychological let down for Nigeria. The referee's lectures to the keeper and then his team-mates were no doubt designed to delay the taking of the kick while the

Foul...Kingsley Michael of Nigeria

Stoppage...Bastien reviews his penalty call

VAR officials made up their mind.

Just 90 seconds, but it seemed much longer of course. Delays like this should not happen, yet they happen all too frequently with VAR – which has been in operation in many tournaments now for at least a season. Yet the delay problem has not yet been banished. It is a serious problem because it plays havoc with one of the sport's most treasured qualities: that of non-stop action.

And when, as in this example, the delay is caused by an offside call that is too precise in every part, it is a scientific intervention that makes things less interesting, less exciting, and, yes, less natural.

> We don't deal with perfection in every day life, we deal with imperfections

In addition, VAR is undermining the field ref's authority – a trend that will, I imagine, get more pronounced as VAR finesses its techniques, and more and more decisions are entrusted to the VAR and his replays.

Maybe we're heading towards an era where the referee's final fiefdom on the field will be his control of the throw-in.

My original thoughts about VAR were all positive – that such a scheme was essential to modernise the game and to add to the referee's importance, not to replace it.

But no footballer should be brought to the climactic moment of taking a penalty kick and then informed that there is no kick. And no referee should have to scurry around giving fatuous instructions to players as he covers for the VAR's delay in reaching a decision. WS

REPORTS WE COULDN'T MAKE UP

Abandoned...Ajax's youth game against rivals Feyenoord

1 BAD EXAMPLE FOR THE KIDS

An under-19 league game between Ajax and Feyenoord was abandoned before half-time following clashes among supporters in the stands – even though visiting fans were banned from the game in Amsterdam.

Such is the ill-feeling between supporters of the two Dutch sides, only coaching staff and family members were allowed to attend Feyenoord's game at the De Toekomst sporting complex.

However, the junior game was stopped after 33 minutes following a disturbance in the stands and, with the visitors from Rotterdam claiming they couldn't ensure the safety of their delegation, the game was abandoned.

2 NO WAY TO CELEBRATE

South Korea Under-18s have been stripped of a trophy for "indecent" celebrations after a player posed for a photo with his foot on it.

South Korea beat China 3-0 to win the Panda Cup, an annual youth tournament staged in the Chinese city of Changdu, but the team were forced to apologise after they were criticised online for the "unforgivable" images.

The topic had 59 million views on Weibo, a Chinese social media platform and the tournament organisers suggested South Korea would not be invited back.

Chinese fans, who watched their team lose all three matches in the tournament, expressed their anger on social media.

"I swear, we will never forgive Korean football," said one user, while another described the behaviour as "barbaric and vulgar". China's state-run *Global Times* daily commented that the South Korea players had "acted like conquerors rather than champions" as the team "ignored the universal ethos of sports".

"The only way to stop similar incidents from happening is very simple: they must start winning."

South Korea beat all three other teams involved – New Zealand, Thailand and China – to win the competition.

3 INJURED STAR IN TUNE

Out since November with knee-ligament damage, Cagliari midfielder Lucas Castro spent his time out of action in a recording studio and has released an album of his work.

Entitled *Que Voy a Hacer* (What Will I Do), the LP features 10 songs by the 30-year-old Argentinian, most of which are in Spanish but with two sung in Italian.

Record... Lucas Castro

4 GONE FISHIN'

German fifth-tier side Jahn Hiesfeld told coach Markus Kay, with one game of the season left, that his contract would not be renewed.

In protest, he sat on the side of the pitch wearing full fishing gear, complete with fishing rod.

Kay told German magazine *11 Freunde* his sacking by the club's president, Dietrich Hulsemann, had been "highly disrespectful".

He argued that although the team had been relegated "I had assumed that I would continue in the national league and accordingly, the plans were well advanced".

Vulgar...South Korea's under-18s

"Things which have nothing to do with sports have defeated sports and football on this occasion"

A spokesman for the Montenegro federation confirms the sacking of coach Ljubisa Tumbakovic for boycotting the Euro 2020 qualifier against Kosovo

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

IN

Iran boss... Marc Wilmots

EUROPE

A winner of three consecutive Serie A titles during his time as coach of Juventus, **ANTONIO CONTE** replaced Luciano Spalletti at Internazionale, while **PAULO FONSECA** left Shakhtar Donetsk and joined Roma.

Former Real Madrid and Spain coach **JULEN LOPETEGUI** took charge of Sevilla, while **ASIER GARITANO** replaced Abelardo Fernandez at Alaves.

After 11 years with Manchester City, **VINCENT KOMPANY** became player-coach at Anderlecht and took the Premier League club's head of academy coaching, **SIMON DAVIES**, to Belgium with him.

Swansea City boss **GRAHAM POTTER** was appointed manager of Brighton & Hove Albion after they sacked Chris Hughton following a run club chairman Tony Bloom said had put their Premier League status "at significant risk".

CARLOS CARVALHAL, who left Swansea City in May 2018, was appointed coach of Portuguese side Rio Ave.

After leading Kilmarnock into Europe next season, **STEVE CLARKE** left to take charge of Scotland's national side. Celtic confirmed **NEIL LENNON** as their permanent manager.

New chance...Andre Villas-Boas

Deal...Antonio Conte (left) with Internazionale president Steven Zhang

Indian chance ...Igor Stimac

ANDRE VILLAS-BOAS replaced Rudi Garcia at Marseille, while **SYLVINHO** was appointed coach of Lyon with his fellow Brazilian **JUNINHO PERNAMBUCANO** becoming the Ligue 1 side's the sporting director.

Stuttgart appointed Holstein Kiel's **TIM WALTER** as coach from next season.

SOUTH AMERICA

His seven-year ban from football now over, ex-FIFA official **HAROLD MAYNE-NICHOLLS** was named executive vice-president of Colo-Colo in his native Chile.

AFRICA

Frenchman **PATRICE NEVEU** was appointed national coach of Gabon.

ASIA

Italy's 2006 World Cup-winning coach **MARCELLO LIPPI** was re-appointed coach of China, fourth months after he initially stepped down.

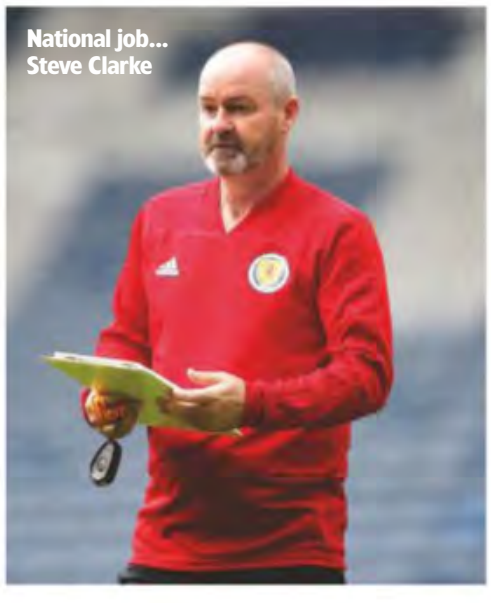
Former Belgium and Ivory Coast boss **MARC WILMOTS** was appointed coach of Iran on a three-year deal.

Croatian **IGOR STIMAC** replaced Stephen Constantine as coach of India, while **TATSUMA YOSHIDA** took charge of Singapore.

Having finished his playing career with Al Sadd, former Barcelona and Spain midfielder **XAVI** was confirmed as coach of the Qatari club.

MARK RUDAN left Wellington Phoenix to take charge of new A-League club Western United. Dutchman **GERTJAN VERBEEK** replaced Marco Kurz at Adelaide United.

TSUYOSHI OTSUKI replaced Oswaldo Oliveira as coach of J.League side Urawa Red Diamonds.

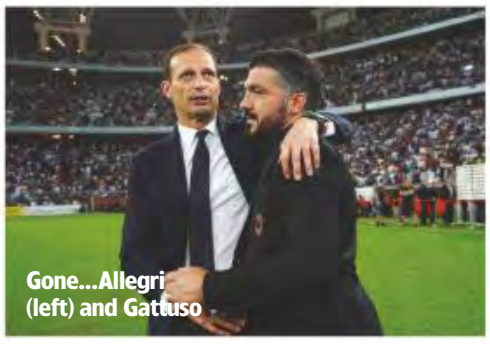


National job... Steve Clarke

"My first great friend in the world of professional football and my room-mate who always wanted to sleep with the air conditioning at 10 degrees"

Cesc Fabregas (right) pays tribute to former Arsenal team-mate Jose Antonio Reyes

Appointments, sackings and loans



Gone...Allegri (left) and Gattuso

OUT

Sacked...Chris Coleman

EUROPE

After four successive league and cup doubles and two Champions League Finals, **MASSIMILIANO ALLEGRI** parted company with Juventus, while **GENNARO GATTUSO** left Milan after failing to qualify for the Champions League.

Former Lazio, Milan and Italy defender **ALESSANDRO NESTA** stepped down as coach of Serie B side Perugia.

JEAN-LOUIS GASSET left Saint-Etienne, while **JOCELYN GOURVENNEC** and **FABIEN MERCADAL** left Guingamp and Caen respectively after relegation from Ligue 1.

QUIQUE SETIEN quit Real Betis after two years as coach, while **EUSEBIO SACRISTAN** left Girona following their relegation from La Liga.

Montenegro sacked their Serbian coach **LJUBISA TUMBAKOVIC** for refusing to take charge of their Euro 2020 qualifier against Kosovo.

CONCACAF

The only American player to feature in four World Cups, **HOUSTON DYNAMO** left-back DaMarcus Beasley will retire at the end of the 2019 MLS season.

ASIA

Former Wales boss **CHRIS COLEMAN**, who led his country to the semi-finals of Euro 2016, was sacked by CSL side Hebei China Fortune.

AFRICA

Swiss coach **CHRISTIAN GROSS** parted company with CAF Confederation Cup winners Zamalek of Egypt.

OBITUARIES

LENNART JOHANSSON
1929-2019

UEFA president for 17 years, he oversaw the conversion of the knockout European Cup into the Champions League which transformed the federation's finances from solid to sensational and its base from a small office in Bern to a futuristic lakeside HQ near Geneva.

The Swede did not have all the answers, but he did have the sense to delegate to those with competence in sectors he lacked, and he deserved better than to see his career at the top fractured by two bitter election defeats: to Sepp Blatter for the FIFA presidency in 1998 and to Michel Platini for the UEFA leadership in 2007.

Johansson was born in Bromma in 1929 and became an AIK supporter as an eight-year-old in 1937. He was club chairman from 1967 to 1980, chair of the Swedish league from 1978 to 1984, then of the Swedish FA from 1985 to 1990.

In his latter role he secured host rights to Sweden for the Euro finals in 1992.

In 1990 he was elected as the fifth president of UEFA in succession to Frenchman Jacques Georges and his 17 years saw him preside over a revolution – not only the generation of multi-million wealth through the Champions League evolution but an explosion of the club game and player power derived from the Bosman verdict in late 1995.

Johansson converted UEFA from a football federation into a corporate entity. He was chairman of the board while hands-on power was commanded by Gerd Aigner and together they took on opposite numbers Joao Havelange and Blatter at FIFA. They wanted the world federation to copy the UEFA route to modernity and new wealth. But they misjudged their opponents and Havelange, infamously, threw the UEFA proposal document into a waste bin.

Johansson also failed to comprehend the significance of Bosman. UEFA had missed several opportunities to reach an out-of-court settlement. When the European Court delivered its verdict he told this writer, complacently: "It doesn't affect UEFA. We are a Swiss organisation."

He could not have been more wrong and UEFA has been a major beneficiary of the judgment.

Two and half years later Johansson was persuaded by his UEFA colleagues to contest the FIFA presidential election, but several national association bosses found cash-stuffed envelopes pushed under their hotel room doors and Blatter won.

As the Champions League went from financial strength to strength, retirement should have beckoned. Instead UEFA allies who feared the revisionism of Platini persuaded him, against his better judgment, to stand for re-election in 2007. He was 77, tired and had nothing new to offer. He lost by 27 votes to 23.

A minor consolation was acclamation as honorary president. But it was a status with no power; only frustration and depression at the flood of corruption scandals which engulfed the world game.

Keir Radnedge

JUSTIN EDINBURGH 1969-2019

The ex-Tottenham Hotspur full-back died following a heart attack. He won the 1991 FA Cup with Spurs and as a manager he won promotion to the Football League, with Newport County in 2013 and Leyton Orient in 2019.

JOSE ANTONIO REYES
1983-2019

The former Spain winger won the 2004 Premier League and 2005 FA Cup with Arsenal, and five Europa League titles – two with Atletico Madrid and three with Sevilla. He also won the 2007 Spanish title with Real Madrid.

Brian GLANVILLE

THE VOICE OF FOOTBALL

Average England performances raise doubts about Southgate

After their somewhat mediocre showing in Portugal, England under Gareth Southgate look towards a demanding new season. The ever-recurring question of a playmaker – a Pirlo, a creative inside-forward as they once were called – is with us again.

There was not one to be seen in the recent tournament and a sad series of injuries has marginalised Jack Wilshere.

In the recent competition, Harry Winks, the 23-year-old Tottenham Hotspur prospect was absent, not being match fit. His previous international appearances have suggested that he could be the man for the job and he certainly deserves an extended chance.

Coming up promisingly on the rails is the precocious Manchester City player Phil Foden, who can only improve with regular appearances in the Premier League, while mention should be made of James Maddison, currently at Leicester City and also young enough to improve with experience.

The lack of such an element in Portugal was all too apparent as England struggled to score, overcome by a superior Holland team in their opening match and coming through only on penalties against Switzerland.

If there were consolations one should surely be the form at right-back of Liverpool's Trent Alexander Arnold who, like others at his club, was not picked for the opening game having taken part in that European Final. Notably, Portugal had no qualms about choosing such players who stood up perfectly well in the event.

Though the match against the Swiss was essentially a meaningless one, it did feature a solid show in central defence by Joe Gomez. Quite why Southgate should have aligned John Stones as a centre-back in the opening game was as baffling in its announcement as it duly became on the field.

It is choices like this which tend to make you wonder about Southgate as manager. Stones is a player who could not even get into his club's first team and with England he duly looks an expensive error, fatally prone to giving chances away – not least because of a somewhat deluded belief that he can operate well on the ball, leading as we saw, not for the first time, to costly mistakes.

Nor did it make any sense to select Fabian Delph in central midfield. Plenty of energy but scant invention; there are surely better and brighter alternatives.

Up front Harry Kane, who had been brought back too early after protracted absence by club and country, looked fitter and more effective. A summer's rest should do him good and he deserves to keep his place up front next season.

Southgate himself has come out fighting over his team and their prospects next season. "We've hit a certain level," he says, "but it's not a level we're satisfied

Doubts...England manager Gareth Southgate

Mistake...Holland's Memphis Depay beats John Stones

with. We have to go again. They are a fantastic group to work with, you saw that from the mentality they showed today for 120 minutes. But we have to keep getting better. We won't settle for anything before we do"

Is he the man to achieve this? I cannot be sure. It was surely dicing with death to use Stones at centre-back.

Fortunately, the manager will have other cards to play. The highly talented and precocious Callum Hudson-Odoi when fit again could make a great difference from the right wing and much more can surely be expected on the other wing from Jadon Sancho, who did not come on until the 105th minute against the Swiss.

> The highly talented and precocious Callum Hudson-Odoi when fit again could make a great difference

Jordan Pickford had a very satisfactory game both in and out of goal, saving one penalty and scoring another.

Pickford, though he had worked hard on penalties in training, admitted that he had never taken one in an actual match before. But he struck his spot-kick in firmly and, crucially, saved one into the bargain.

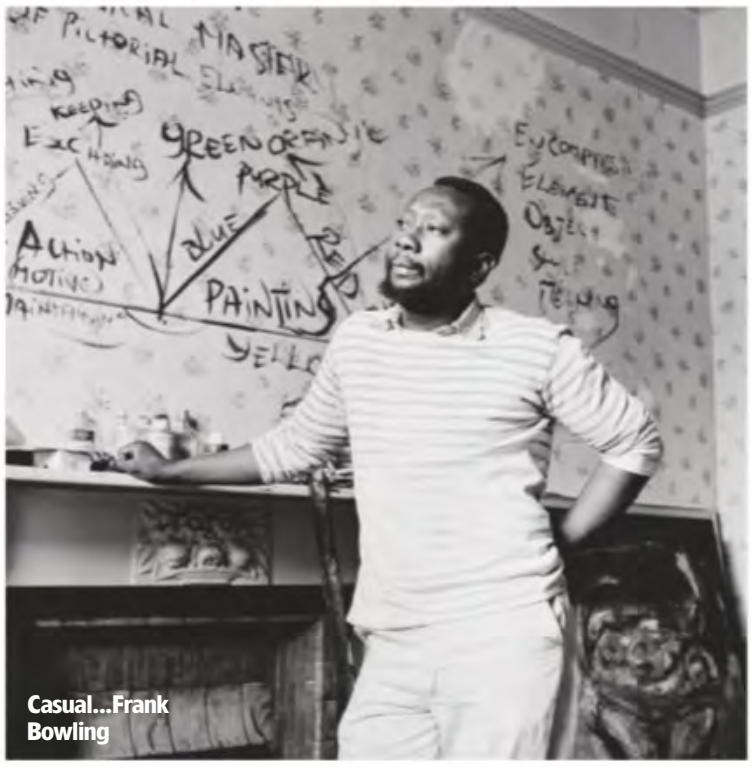
Football imitating art

Football, says a character in an Arnold Bennett novel, has to do with everything, and we have seen as much again in a recent episode that centres on the Guyanan abstract painter Frank Bowling, who has just been given a major Tate show in London.

My enduring memory of him, however, concerns the goal he gave away. He was in the latter 1950s a sub for my Chelsea Casuals Sunday team, then very much in its infancy and struggling against a BBC team on their ground at Motspur Park.

One of our players has to come off injured and, as I wrote at the time, Frank came on to the field all in white, "the picture of shining ebony fitness". Within moments he had crashed the ball into the net. Our net.

But it was good to read his name again in so much happier circumstances.



Casual...Frank Bowling

Ronaldo remains an exemplary talent

One thing the tournament in Portugal proved was the enduring brilliance of Cristiano Ronaldo. The salient player of the competition, the architect of his country's success, he showed once again that he remains among the most gifted players in the world.

Winners...Cristiano Ronaldo (left) and Bernardo Silva

But he was not the player of the tournament. That honour went to his team-mate Bernardo Silva, the Manchester City midfielder, who played a glorious part in the decisive Portuguese goal against Holland in the Final.

With the game still goalless on the hour, he set off on a splendid solo run, the essence of skill, technique and determination, concluding it magnificently with the pass which enabled Goncalo Guedes to score the decisive goal. The Dutch keeper did get a hand to the ball but not enough to keep it out.

No one was happier about this victory than Ronaldo, with bitter memories of that sensational defeat by Greece on home territory all those years ago.

An abundance of right-backs

It never rains but it pours in football as elsewhere. Just at the moment when England boast such a dynamic and versatile right-back as Trent Alexander-Arnold, up pops another in the hugely promising Aaron Wan-Bissaka, whom Manchester United would love to buy.

If they did it would cost them a great deal of money. Still in England's Under-21 side, the Crystal Palace youngster has all the attributes and versatility to make exciting progress.

It is a pity really that there should be two very young and greatly gifted English right-backs. But such is life and such is soccer.

Talent...Wan-Bissaka

Dele Alli's star will rise again

Last season was not one of the brightest for Tottenham Hotspur's Dele Alli who has modestly called it "a great season for learning".

He did at least get some playing time in Portugal and will remain in contention in the ensuing season in what looks a pretty crowded field – though as we have seen it hardly includes a superabundance of playmakers.

Now that Aston Villa are back to the top division it will be interesting to see whether the young Jack Grealish can stake his claim. There is little doubt about his basic ability.

● Read Brian Glanville's weekly online column at worldsoccer.com

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LILLE ON THE RISE

They may not have won any kind of trophy, but there's no doubt Lille had a stellar campaign. In the eyes of many, they enjoyed the best of any French team, including Paris Saint-Germain.

Under Christophe Galtier, *Les Dogues* qualified for the Champions League by finishing second in Ligue 1, fully 16 points behind PSG. But if you think that isn't particularly impressive, think again.

When the 52-year-old Galtier arrived in December 2017, it's no exaggeration to say Lille were in meltdown.

Majority shareholder and club president Gerard Lopez had brought in respected Argentinian coach Marcelo Bielsa that summer, but by November the team were second bottom, players were openly criticising his methods and the fans were ready to unfurl the "Bielsa Out" banners. On November 22, Lopez saved them the bother when he suspended Bielsa, making a definitive contractual break on December 15. And to add to the club's woes, the government body that regulates French clubs' finances slapped a winter transfer ban on Lille.

Having left his last position as coach of Saint-Etienne in May 2017, Galtier might have been forgiven for having second thoughts about taking the job on. But he rolled up his sleeves and got to work on preserving the club's top-flight status. It wasn't easy, but Galtier led Lille to safety with a game to spare with three consecutive victories at the business end of the season.

Knowing they had dodged a sizeable bullet, Galtier worked extra hard in the close season to remodel the squad. In came attacking midfielders Jonathan Bamba and Jonathan Ikone, experienced Portugal defender Jose Fonte, promising Turkish right-back Zeki Celik and much-travelled forward Loic Remy. Galtier felt that these new recruits – alongside Brazilian midfielders Thiago Maia and Thiago Mendes, keeper Mike Maignan and wideman Nicolas Pepe – would give him the backbone of a competitive unit.

And so it proved in a remarkable turnaround that saw Champions League group-stage football return to the northern French city for the first time since the 2011-12 season.

Transformation... Christophe Galtier

"It's been a very emotional and eventful season and it's been wonderful to watch these players progressing," says Galtier. "I had some great times at Saint-Etienne, but this has to be my best season ever."

While club skipper Fonte had an outstanding personal campaign, the star of this Lille team was undoubtedly Pepe.

Having arrived from Angers for €10million in the summer of 2017, the Ivory Coast international never quite hit the heights playing as a centre-forward. Intelligently, Galtier moved him to the right wing this season and Pepe never looked back, scoring 22 goals and providing 11 assists in a dazzling campaign.

Sadly for Lille fans, Pepe will be leaving to play on a bigger stage next season. But with the majority of his squad looking like they'll still be around, Galtier has every reason to feel he can maintain Lille's upward momentum.

Howard Johnson

Thrashing...Lille celebrate a 5-1 win over PSG in April

GRASSHOPPERS CRASH OUT OF SUPER LEAGUE

Three years ago, Uli Forte was appointed coach of Zurich with a handful of games left that season in a bid to save the 12-time national champions from relegation. Ultimately, he failed, but he did lead the team back to the top flight at the first attempt.

And now Forte faces an almost identical job with Zurich's neighbours, Grasshoppers, after the country's most successful club of all time crashed out of the Swiss Super League.

After a dramatic final two months of the season – which featured a change of president, three coaches and two matches abandoned – a 6-1 defeat at Young Boys means Grasshoppers will play in the Challenge League next term for the first time since 1951.

The club's problems have been building up ever since they won the last of their 27 league titles, in 2003. In the following 16 years, there have been 13 coaches – plus Carlos Bernegger, who has stepped in on an interim basis four times – and eight presidents. And in that time, Basle have won 11 titles, Zurich three and Young Boys the last two.

Grasshoppers have also been homeless since 2007, when their Hardturm stadium – which hosted games at the 1954 World Cup – was closed for rebuilding, only for the project to get bogged down in a planning quagmire. In the meantime, the team have had to share the Letzigrund – an athletics stadium with a lukewarm atmosphere at the best of times – with Zurich. This has been particularly tough as clubs such as Basle, Young Boys, St Gallen, Lucerne and Thun all play in centrally located, modern arenas that incorporate shopping centres and offices to provide much-needed extra revenue.

There was a brief revival in 2013, when Forte was previously in charge, as they finished second in the league and won the Swiss Cup, their last major trophy. Even though Forte left for Young Boys, Grasshoppers finished runners-up again the following season, but since then have been eighth, fourth, eighth, ninth and now finally bottom of the 10-team league.

There had been what looked like a change of fortune in November, when a local referendum gave the green light for a project to build a new 18,000-capacity stadium, to be shared with Zurich, on the old Hardturm site. The club celebrated by beating St Gallen that same day – and then failed to win another league game for the rest of the season.

Former Basle and Hamburg coach Thorsten Fink managed to cling on until March, when he was replaced by another German, Tomislav Stipic, who had never coached a top-flight team before. He had, however, twice suffered relegation in his homeland, with second-tier Erzgebirge Aue in 2015 and third-tier Stuggart Kickers the following season.

"My mission is clear and everything will be directed towards this goal," he said on his appointment. But after six games, including one at Sion which had to be called off after visiting fans threw pyrotechnics onto the pitch, he was gone.

Despite protests from supporters still resentful of his departure six years earlier, Forte was recalled. In the meantime there had been more shuffling in the boardroom as Stephan Anliker stepped aside as president, while remaining the majority shareholder, and was replaced by Stephan Rietiker, who was described as a "seasoned entrepreneur with broad executive management experience".

Results, however, failed to improve and with four games left to play Grasshoppers went to Lucerne needing to avoid defeat to keep alive their hopes of avoiding the drop.

The team gave an abject performance and trailed 4-0 after just over an hour. Furious travelling fans moved to the front of the terraces and threatened to storm the pitch in protest. And when club representatives tried to talk them down, the supporters demanded the Grasshoppers players hand over their shirts, shorts and socks, and crawl to the dressing room in their underwear. A compromise was reached, with some players handing over their shirts which, according to the fans, they

> "We need to quickly put together a team that will bounce back immediately...because one thing is clear: GCZ is an institution and belongs in the Super League"
>
> **Uli Forte, Grasshoppers coach**

Despair...Yoric Ravet

Anger...Grasshoppers fans at Lucerne

Photos: EPA-EFE/REX/Shutterstock

were not worthy of wearing. At least two supporters went onto the pitch and shoved Grasshoppers striker Aimery Pinga in what appeared to be a racially motivated attack.

Following this latest embarrassment for a league that has been plagued by violence over the years, Swiss Football League CEO Claudio Schafer said: "People think that Switzerland is so clean and well organised and these things don't happen here, but they do." As for the attack on Pinga, he added: "We must all act together vehemently against racist thinking and any kind of discrimination."

Grasshoppers' fate was confirmed four days later against Young Boys in Berne, but Forte had known that the game was up after the Lucerne match.

"This is the end of an era and incredibly sad," he said. "You do not expect something like that from the Grasshoppers. If one looks at the last few years, however, it was clear that relegation was looming.

"Now, we need to quickly put together a team that will bounce back immediately. For this goal, I will do everything in my power, because one thing is clear: GCZ is an institution and belongs in the Super League."

Brian Homewood

Sad...Uli Forte

CLOSE BOND OF SHOCK WINNERS

Underdogs... Piast Gliwice

Second-favourites to be relegated, behind promoted Zaglebie Sosnowiec, Piast Gliwice defied the odds to become Polish champions for the first time.

Having only avoided the drop thanks to a victory in their final game of last season, coach Waldemar Fornalik's position looked extremely vulnerable should Piast begin badly again this term. However, his side made a good start to the campaign and were in the top half of the table when the league split, although nobody at the time thought of them as serious title contenders. Instead, the championship looked like a two-horse race between favourites Legia Warsaw and Lechia Gdansk, who had surprisingly led the table during the regular Ekstraklasa season.

But then, in the top eight, Champions Group play-offs, Piast beat Lechia 2-0 in Gdansk and Legia 1-0 in Warsaw to top the table with three games to go.

For a team that had spent many years in the shadow of their Silesia-region rivals and 14-time Polish champions Gornik Zabrze, the lack of expectation clearly helped Piast, whose only past successes were two domestic Cup Finals (1978 and 1983) and an Ekstraklasa runners-up spot (2016). When asked what he was going through in the closing weeks, Fornalik answered: "Why pressure? Runners-up position will be a huge success for us."

And when Piotr Parzyszek scored the goal that beat Lech Poznan on the last day of the season, Fornalik declared: "We have had a beautiful adventure with a real happy ending."

For a side of few stars – key players such as defender Jakub Czerwinski and defensive midfielder Tomasz Jodlowiec had failed to make the grade at Legia, whose €38million budget is in stark contrast to Piast's €5m – Fornalik's secret was to forge a great team spirit.

"I still cannot believe it is true, that everything really happened," Ecuadorian midfielder Joel Valencia said in an interview with *Przeglad Sportowy*.

"Piast are real family. We even spend our summer holidays together."

> "Piast are real family. We even spend our summer holidays together"
> **Ecuadorian midfielder Joel Valencia**

The father figure of the squad, who was responsible for creating such a special atmosphere in the squad, was the national coach for 15 months, but failed to qualify for the 2014 World Cup finals in Brazil and was seen as a "lost coach" compared with his successor, Adam Nawalka.

And while Fornalik found his way again in the 2019 championship, Nawalka was sacked by Lech Poznan in March after just four months in the job.

Dariusz Kurowski

STRUGGLING ANDERLECHT TURN TO OLD BOY KOMPANY

Swapping the silverware-smelting works that is Manchester City for the role of player-coach at his old Anderlecht stomping ground, Vincent Kompany will be only too aware of the enormity of the challenge he faces at the Brussels club.

Anderlecht are, to put it bluntly, a wreck at the moment. Once Belgium's number one side by a country mile, and renowned for their continental trophy exploits in the 1970s and 1980s, *Les Mauves* simply no longer inspire the same awe-struck respect. This season they could only finish sixth in the league and next term they must do without European football for the first time in 56 years.

Their squad is not good enough to compete for trophies in Belgium, let alone Europe, and money for new signings is tight. Just to make matters worse, the police recently raided the club offices in an investigation into alleged money-laundering and dubious transfers.

It's all very well for Anderlecht's movers and shakers to gleefully talk about a bright new tomorrow, promising to follow the Ajax youth-development model, but such a project has to be planned for, funded and then put in place. There are no quick fixes here, only serious questions.

Will the fans at the Parc Astrid have the necessary patience for a long-term overhaul? And how will Kompany co-exist with Anderlecht's other big beasts: irrepressible owner Marc Coucke and director of sport Michael Verschueren?

The imminent arrival of Kompany has certainly caught the imagination of the club's fans. The charismatic centre-back is an immensely popular figure in his homeland and rightly thought of as a winner and a leader. And, crucially, he has the Anderlecht DNA, having started his career there.

> "This is great news and a tremendous boost for our championship. We couldn't have dreamt of such a big-name player returning here"
> **Thomas Chatelle on Kompany**

Naturally, doubts have been expressed as to the 33-year-old's ability to wear two totally different hats. At any level of the game, the dual-role of player-coach is as taxing as it is complicated.

Verschueren, however, believes, they have the answer at hand, explaining: "Vincent will decide the tactics and those who play. When he is on the pitch, he will rely on the assistant he brings in to do the necessary coaching. It's a little out of the ordinary but we need to innovate."

Thomas Chatelle, a former Anderlecht and Belgium winger, who these days

Teamwork...Kompany (left) with Michael Verschueren

Struggling...Anderlecht try to keep out Gent's Igor Plastun

works as a TV pundit, has mixed feelings about the second coming of Kompany. "This is great news and a tremendous boost for our championship," he told national broadcasters RTBF. "We couldn't have dreamt of such a big-name player returning here.

"I've always argued that you need clarity in an organisation and you can't say this move has improved matters in this sense. In sport, things have to be simple. It's not good to have too many people making decisions.

"I would have preferred it for Vincent to come in purely as a player and then to take up another position when he hangs up his boots. It seems convoluted that we now have a [club] coach playing for the national team. The issue will have to be quickly clarified."

After 11 glorious years in Manchester, Vince the Prince has a new brief – that of Anderlecht's saviour. Good luck to him.

Nick Bidwell

OLD-SCHOOL UNION HIT THE HEIGHTS

Up...Union fans celebrate victory in the play-off

Next season, for the first time in 42 years, Berlin will have two clubs in the Bundesliga: the well-established Hertha and top-flight neophytes Union, who defied the odds to see off Stuttgart in the promotion/relegation play-offs.

Union's margin of victory in the two-legged repechage might have been as thin as gossamer, only prevailing on the away-goals rule after a pair of drawn encounters – 2-2 in Stuttgart, 0-0 on home turf in the return – but no one can say that the unfashionable Berliners do not deserve their moment in the sun.

While Stuttgart were undoubtedly the better technical side, what they crucially did not have was Union's intense work ethic. "*Vollgas*" (full throttle) is a phrase you often hear in German football circles and, under coach Urs Fischer, Union live and breathe the word.

> "This is unreal. I can't believe it. I've been coming to this club for 40 years and have waited for this day"
> **Union president Dirk Zingler**

On the face of it, this season's play-offs should have been a no contest. In one corner Stuttgart, thrice Bundesliga champions and featuring seven full internationals, including Germany striker Mario Gomez, French World Cup-winning defender Benjamin Pavard and former Bayern Munich stopper Holger Badstuber. In the other, a side of largely unappreciated journeymen.

So much for hierarchy and conventional wisdom. Union were just not going to be denied and now become the 56th club to make the Bundesliga and the first second-tier side to win the play-offs since 2012.

"This is unreal," sighs Union president Dirk Zingler. "I can't believe it. I've been coming to this club for 40 years and have waited for this day. We've drawn a lot of games this season and now we're going up after drawing two more. Sometimes in football less is more. We hope to prove that in the Bundesliga."

Once a yo-yo club in the old East Germany, Union are old school all the way. Indeed, the Stadion An der Alten Forsterei, in the Kopenick district of south-east Berlin, is the last place you would go for a modern matchday experience. Retro football is the order of the day here. No special effects, light shows or a drum-and-bass soundtrack for a goal. And it's standing room only in an edifice reminiscent of the 1970s.

Union are essentially a tight-knit community of supporters. When the club was facing bankruptcy back in 2004, the fans rose to the occasion by filling the coffers themselves. A little more than a decade ago, those same followers turned up in numbers to voluntarily renovate the stadium's terraces, thus safeguarding their professional licence.

All for one and one for all. Union by name, union by nature.

Nick Bidwell

UNBEATEN PAOK LAND THE DOUBLE

Proudly clad in black and white, fans of PAOK are spending their summer partying after the team claimed its first Greek league title in 34 years and then completed the domestic double with a 1-0 win over AEK in the Cup Final.

Cup winners for the last three seasons, PAOK have a reputation for saving their best for knockout competitions. But this term the team from Thessaloniki also displayed their consistency and staying power in the Super League race, with 26 victories in 30 fixtures and becoming one of only two sides – the other being Panathinaikos in 1963-64 – to remain unbeaten in a top-flight campaign.

> "This is the craziest group of players and fans you could wish to have"
> **PAOK skipper Vieirinha**

The unbridled joy of the PAOK faithful is easy to comprehend. Prior to this term, the club had only captured two league titles in 93 years of existence, in 1976 and 1985, and have had to watch on enviously as Olympiakos, Panathinaikos and AEK ruled the roost. For PAOK supporters, their team's success this season was a delicious dish of revenge, a pushback against what they regard as establishment misrule and hostility.

Many in the northern metropolis of Greece's second city believe in the conspiracy theory that the Athenian clubs, in association with the country's football authorities, simply do not want the likes of PAOK to prosper and win. Supporters angrily flag up the 14 league points which have been deducted from their side over the last three years and are convinced they would have clinched the title last season if it were not for heavily sanctions following crowd trouble at their Toumba stadium.

Champions...fans in Thessaloniki

Controversial...PAOK president Ivan Savvidis

Unsavoury incidents such as Olympiakos coach Oscar Garcia being struck by a projectile and PAOK president Ivan Savvidis – complete with holstered gun – storming onto the pitch to argue with the referee during a top-of-the-table match with AEK certainly came at a high cost, and everyone at the club was determined to set the record straight this season.

"This is the craziest group of players and fans you could wish to have," laughs skipper and Portuguese international left-back Vieirinha, who despite damaged cruciate ligaments insisted on limping on for the final minute of the title-clinching win against Levadiakos. "That's the secret of our success: the bond that we all have.

"Add in the experience and desire of the whole squad and you have the basis for our achievements."

Nothing ever was going to derail PAOK; not the two-point deficit with which they started the season – another legacy of the Savvidis gun-toting affair – not the raft of injuries to key players, nor

Goals...Yevhen Shakhov was one of 21 scorers for PAOK

the mid-term departure of Serb striker Aleksandar Prijovic, who joined Saudi outfit Al Ittihad in January. In a sure sign of attacking potency, PAOK managed over 100 goals in all competitions, with 21 different players on the scoresheet.

Four individuals especially stood out in a side astutely designed by Romanian coach Ravzan Lucescu: captain Vieirinha, who notably struck home a long-range stunner in the vital 3-1 home win over Olympiakos in February, brilliant keeper Alexandros Paschalakis, and the Dutch-Brazilian wing combo of Diego Bisewar and Leo Jaba.

Nick Bidwell

KOKORIN ROW OVERSHADOWS ZENIT VICTORY

Disgraced... Aleksandr Kokorin

A debate is raging in Russia as to whether jailed Zenit forward Aleksandr Kokorin has a moral right to a league winners' medal this season.

Kokorin, who recently received an 18-month prison sentence for two counts of assault, is technically entitled to the aforementioned prize. Before his arrest in October and seven-month spell in custody awaiting trial, the Russia international did appear in three games for future champions Zenit and, according to the rules of the country's Premier League, every member of the title-winning squad is eligible for a medal.

The all-important questions, though, are moral ones.

Should someone convicted of gratuitous violence deserve such an accolade? What sort of message does it send out to the young and impressionable? And is it correct for a so-called role model to be held to a higher standard of behaviour?

Zenit officials insist they have no intention of withholding Kokorin's honour. "I think the medal should find its way to the player when he comes out of prison," Zenit president Aleksandr Medvedev told *Sport-Express*. "We'll wait so that he can receive it personally."

It is not yet clear if Kokorin, capped 48 times, still has a future with Zenit. He will be out of contract shortly and is expected to be behind bars at least until September. While Zenit have promised to "punish" him, club coach Sergei Semak has hinted at the possibility of a new deal in the pipeline.

Once hailed as a golden boy, the 28-year-old's time in the national team arena may be at an end too. Tellingly, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov described the conduct of Kokorin as "despicable". Russian sports minister Pavel Kolobkov was equally unimpressed, stating: "These are outrageous acts which cast a shadow over the entire sport. Especially after our national team performed so well at the World Cup."

That one of Russia's most talented front runners is now incarcerated is a tragic tale indeed, on a human as well as a sporting level. Yet he only has himself to blame; guilty – along with brother Kirill and footballing pal Pavel Mamaev of Krasnodar – of not one but two acts of drunken GBH last autumn: the beating of a trade ministry official in a Moscow cafe and an attack on the chauffeur of a top TV presenter outside a hotel. CCTV footage of the incidents went viral on social media, showing the players and their entourage in the most damning of lights.

Not so long ago, Kokorin was being linked with Arsenal, Tottenham Hotspur, Manchester United and Paris Saint-Germain. A move overseas might well be his best option on release. Provided that he cleans up his act.

Nick Bidwell

> "These are outrageous acts which cast a shadow over the entire sport. Especially after our national team performed so well at the World Cup"
>
> **Russian sports minister Pavel Kolobkov**

GASPERINI LEADS ATALANTA INTO THE CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Eleven years ago, not long after he had arrived in Italy to coach Internazionale all the way to a Champions League trophy, Jose Mourinho came up against a relatively unknown coach in Gian Piero Gasperini.

In those days, "Gasp" was in charge of a useful Genoa side that featured players such as Argentinian striker Diego Milito, Brazilian midfielder Thiago Motta and full-back Domenico Criscito. Surprisingly, Genoa held league leaders Inter to a 0-0 draw at the San Siro on that October 2008 day, even though Genoa had finished the game with just 10 players.

La Repubblica's match report the next day said of what had looked like a disappointing result for the champions: "Genoa played a very handy, tactically very shrewd game, shutting down Inter in midfield and stopping them play."

Three months later, when asked by *La Gazzetta dello Sport* to comment on his first six months in Italian football, Mourinho returned to that goalless draw with Genoa and said: "Gasperini is the coach who has given me most difficulty. In that game, I kept making changes but he matched me every time.

"For anyone who likes good football, that was a fantastic 0-0 draw."

Ironically, Mourinho's praise may have earned Gasperini the job as his successor at Inter. That came in 2010 but proved to be a disaster and, after losing four out of five games, he was sacked after less than three months. Arguably, the post-Mourinho Inter were simply too psychologically and physically washed up to deal with a new, demanding coach.

As Atalanta prepare for a first-ever Champions League campaign next season, perhaps the best news they have had this spring came just three days after their final game in Serie A – a 3-1 win over Sassuolo to guaranteed a highest-ever third-place finish – namely, that Gasperini would be staying with the club to lead their European campaign.

From the Juventus school, both as a player and as a youth-team coach, the 61-year-old has gained the respect of many important colleagues, not just Mourinho. Expressing his appreciation of Gasperini recently, former Milan and Italy coach Arrigo Sacchi told *La Gazzetta dello Sport*: "His team plays a football in which you see the coach's imprint, you see his ideas. His players are brave and they are not frightened to play their way out of difficult situations...in short, they believe in their own ability."

Another respected coach to have admired Gasperini's work this season is the former Milan boss Fabio Capello. Speaking after Ajax had beaten Juve in the Champions League, he said it "has been years" since he had seen a team play like the Dutch side, adding: "Ajax play a very fast, high quality game, they're good to watch.

"In Italy, you could compare them to Atalanta, a side that simply does not let you play, doesn't let you breathe, which defends in numbers and which attacks in numbers and does not play a lot through the goalkeeper."

After his setback with Inter in 2010, it took Gasperini some time to get his career back on track, and his renaissance has flourished with a vengeance since he moved to Atalanta in 2016.

A club with a deserved reputation for

> "His players are brave and they are not frightened to play their way out of difficult situations...in short, they believe in their own ability"
>
> **Arrigo Sacchi on Gasperini**

Work rate... Josip Ilicic

On a high...Gasperini

developing talented youngsters, Atalanta are not meant to be Champions League contenders. But in the last three seasons, Gasperini has rewritten the script.

In his first year in charge, the club finished fourth, recording what was until this year its best-ever Serie A finish. Under Gasperini, Atalanta have twice played in the Europa League, being far from disgraced in eliminations by Borussia Dortmund last season and Copenhagen this year.

Not for nothing, Atalanta, along with Ajax, are the only side to have spoiled the all-conquering Juve season, having eliminated them in January from the Italian Cup.

Coaches like Capello and Sacchi have been hugely impressed this season by Atalanta's blend of unrelenting tempo, combined with organisation and quality. Arguably, that quality is best represented in experienced key players such as Argentinian playmaker Diego Gomez, and Slovene attacking midfielder Josip Ilicic, two players who combine genuine class with work rate.

It is interesting to reflect that both players have been in Italy since 2010, yet both have played by far their best football at Atalanta. Some of the credit for that has to go to Gasperini.

With a view to the Champions League, it is obviously good news for Atalanta that not only Gasperini but also both Gomez and Ilicic look likely to stay with the club. However, given the budget limitations, they could be tempted this summer to sell their Colombian striker Duvan Zapata, the scorer of 23 goals in Serie A this season.

Experience... Alejandro Gomez

> "Ajax play a fast, high quality game, they're good to watch. In Italy, you could compare them to Atalanta"
> **Fabio Capello**

The proceeds from that sale might be put to good use to strengthen and enlarge a squad which already features an important nucleus built around such as Pierluigi Gollini in goal, Jose Luis Palomino and Andrea Masiello in defence as well as Marten de Roon and Remo Freuler in midfield.

However, the key figure in next season's continental adventure will undoubtedly be Gasperini.

As the Atalanta team celebrated that vital win against Sassuolo on the last day of the season, the unmistakable sounds of the Champions League anthem rang out all around the Mapei stadium.

And when the familiar tones sounded, some of the 15,000 Atalanta fans in the stadium started chanting: "We want Barcelona now."

While the great Catalan giants are hardly likely to be shivering in their boots just yet, if and when Atalanta do draw one of the big clubs next autumn, the good and great would be advised to take nothing for granted.

Some memorable European nights of the David and Goliath variety await.

Paddy Agnew

Bring on Barca ...Atalanta fans

STYLISH VAN PERSIE BOWS OUT

For 18 years, his way of play has shown football's romantic side. But now, 35-year-old Robin Van Persie has called it a day, marking the end of a career for one of Holland's all-time greats who should have collected much more silverware but instead learned some valuable lessons.

It was a journey that turned him from a unbearable rebel into a well-balanced family man.

The difference between his two spells at Feyenoord could hardly have been more pronounced. A highly gifted and successful youngster but hard to control, he was "Mr Positivo" in his last two injury-prone seasons in Rotterdam.

This time he played with an eye for the fans and helping his club in every way he could. It was clear that a different, more mature and well-balanced family man had returned; a player who was cheered in every stadium and also by opposition fans. "That was nice after 11 years of being abused in the Premier League in away games," he noted.

However, that positivism wasn't always the case. When Van Persie – who started at Excelsior at the age of five before moving across the river Maas to Feyenoord – first came on the scene in 2002, the 19-year-old was a rebellious character. Openly clashing with veterans such as Pierre Van Hooijdonk and coach Bert Van Marwijk, he was even sent home before the UEFA Super Cup game against Real Madrid in Monaco.

And that was despite being a key player in Feyenoord's UEFA Cup-winning campaign the previous season.

With his situation becoming more and more unsettled, Arsenal proved to be his lifeline. Under the guidance of Dennis Bergkamp, Thierry Henry and Arsene Wenger – who turned him from a winger into a striker – Van Persie finally realised what it meant to be a professional.

It was in the Premier League where he made the biggest impression. Although he only won the FA Cup and Community Shield in eight years with the Gunners, he scored 96 goals in 194 games.

He was at his peak when lured away by Manchester United and in 2013 he became the Premier League's top scorer for the second time when leading United to their 20th title.

It remains the club's most recent title success, but was also an achievement that he failed to surpass. After Alex Ferguson left, he started suffering from injuries and disappointing seasons under David Moyes and Louis Van Gaal.

A move to Turkey and Fenerbahce was never successful and it was during his stay in Istanbul that he decided it was time to return home to Holland.

Although his final farewell wasn't as spectacular as that of Dirk Kuyt, who led Feyenoord to the Eredivisie title in his last game, Van Persie fully deserved more than a 2-0 defeat against Den Haag and an anonymous third place in the league.

After all, he is his country's all-time top international scorer netting 50 goals in 102 matches. He was a key member of the team that finished runner-up and third at consecutive World Cups.

True, he won't be remembered for winning loads of silverware, but Van Persie should be remembered for his way of playing: a stylist who put in some wonderful displays and scored some delightful goals.

When his name is mentioned in the future, his diving header in the 2014 World Cup opening game against Spain will immediately spring to mind. Much more than his supposed lack of trophies.

Klaas-Jan Droppert

Farewell...bidding goodbye to his fans

> He was at his peak when lured away by Manchester United and in 2013 he became the Premier League's top scorer for the second time, leading United to their 20th title

OTHER RETIREMENTS IN 2019

Rene Adler	Tim Howard
Andrea Barzagli	Aaron Hughes
Yossi Benayoun	Julio Baptista
Bruno	Gabor Kiraly
Petr Cech	Jon Walters
Marouane Chamakh	Xavi

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LIVERPOOL EDGE ALL-ENGLISH AFFAIR

Experience tells as Klopp's men claim sixth title

Been there. Done that. Now got the European Cup. The 2019 UEFA Champions League showdown was not the best of Finals. Nor was it the worst, though the outcome had been predicted because Liverpool brought the stronger team, the deeper squad and the greater investment.

Most important, however, Jurgen Klopp's team boasted one crucial quality denied to Tottenham: the weight of experience from the same occasion a year earlier.

They had no cause for pause to gauge the emotional temperature or catch their breath in the rarefied atmosphere of the world's biggest club game. All that had been computed in Kiev. Hence it was straight down to business: into attack, into the penalty box and into the lead – courtesy of Sadio Mane's chip, Mousa Sissoko's handball, referee Damir Skomina's instant certitude and Mohamed Salah's penalty.

The first Egyptian to score in a Final also claimed its second-fastest goal, after Paolo Maldini's strike against Liverpool for Milan in 2005. Tottenham needed a full hour to recover their composure, put their shattered game back together.

Early advantage... Salah's second-minute penalty

Klopp the perfectionist, looking back at the video, may reflect that his team should have pushed on and extended their lead when the opportunity beckoned. Instead, they swapped *gegenpressing* for a containment game which just about did the job. Yet their path to a sixth success – only Real Madrid (13) and Milan (seven) have been champions more often – depended on keeper Alisson. His fine saves in the closing stages illustrated another quality which Liverpool lacked when luckless Loris Karius was in goal, disastrously, against Real Madrid.

This was the first time in which the Premier League had provided all four finalists in UEFA's two competitions. More's the pity that this one was as unsatisfying a football experience as Chelsea's Europa League dismissal of Arsenal in Baku three days earlier. In ending Klopp's jinxed run of six defeats in Finals, Liverpool also managed victory in only the second all-English Final, after Manchester United's shoot-out victory over Chelsea in 2008.

Mauricio Pochettino, manager of Final debutants Tottenham, had answered the most burning of selection questions by including top scorer Harry Kane in his starting line-up even though the England leader had not played for seven weeks after injuring an ankle in the quarter-final opener against Manchester City.

The decision was a gamble. Kane

Six appeal... Liverpool celebrate with the trophy

lasted the 90 minutes but not quite at 100 per cent.

As the first half stuttered back into life so Sissoko thrashed an optimistic effort high over Alisson's bar and Liverpool responded with a low drive from Trent Alexander-Arnold which skimmed wide of Hugo Lloris' right-hand post.

Liverpool came closest to a further goal when Spurs backed off the advancing Andy Robertson and allowed him to arrow a shot goalwards.

Lloris tipped the ball over the bar for one of Liverpool's six first-half corners – which said more about the balance of

Miss...Son heads over

Outnumbered... Spurs clear a Liverpool attack

first-half power than the statistics which recorded Spurs as having managed 61 per cent of possession. But what matters is how a team capitalises on the possession it enjoys.

Spurs offered more intent early in the second half, which prompted Klopp to make his first substitution by calling up Divock Origi in place of Roberto Firmino, who had his own injury issues.

Spurs had no option but to throw caution to the wind. Too late did they put

> Liverpool swapped *gegenpressing* for a containment game which just about did the job

Alisson to work with two quick-fire saves from Son Heung-min and Lucas Moura and a defiant dive to deflect Christian Eriksen's free-kick. Origi duly snatched a belated second goal after Spurs failed to clear a corner.

Liverpool's all-round workmanship had earned them a right to celebrate. Tottenham did not disgrace themselves. However, in years to come and transfer funds restricted by stadium costs, they may bitterly regret having allowed this rarest of opportunities to pass them by.

Keir Radnedge

2019 CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FINAL
June 1 - Madrid Metropolitano

TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR	**0**
LIVERPOOL	**2**
(Salah 2pen, Origi 87)	

HT: 0-1. Att: . Ref: Skomina (Slovenia)

WHAT THEY SAID

JURGEN KLOPP *(Liverpool manager)*
"Both teams had not played for three weeks so getting the rhythm was difficult and also there were the different circumstances with two English teams playing one another and, near the end, Alisson had to make a few saves.

"He played a sensational game and looked unbeatable and we also scored our goals at the right moments. Usually after a Final I have to explain: 'How did you lose this game?' but this time I want to enjoy the moment for all the people round the world who were with us and are celebrating crazily.

"We had a sensational night but my feeling is mostly relief for my family because the last six times we always flew on holiday with a silver medal which doesn't feel too cool so this time is completely differently.

"For our families it's great and also for the players. We were all pretty much crying on the pitch because it was so big. It means so much to us.

"We want to win things and this is only the start because it's a wonderful age group who have the best time of their careers still ahead of them."

VIRGIL VAN DIJK
(Liverpool – Man of the Match)
"Jurgen Klopp is a fantastic manager but also a fantastic human being. How he handles us as players both at the games and outside the games is outstanding.

"In July, when we start again, we want to challenge for every trophy if possible. We have the squad for it and hopefully we can challenge Manchester City for the Premier League because they are not going anywhere and to be in the Champions League Final for a third year in a row would be something beautiful."

MAURICIO POCHETTINO
(Tottenham manager)
"To concede a penalty after 30 seconds had a massive impact but the team were great because that was very difficult.

"Overall we dominated the game but Liverpool were more clinical in front of goal. We had chances but we didn't score. It's so painful but at the same time we need to be calm and analyse things.

"We can feel proud. The season was fantastic. We played the Champions League Final for the first time. It's so painful to lose this Final but at the same time we need to be positive.

"Always after a very painful situation you have to reflect on how you built success and then prepare to build the next period in your life. It's going to be tough but after a few hours we will change our minds and start to be positive.

"It would have been incredible for us to lift that trophy. It would have surprised people a lot because over the past five years Tottenham have prioritised building the new stadium and spent zero pounds.

"So this club and the fan base deserve a lot of credit because this was historic and hopefully it will be the beginning of a very successful period for the club."

CHELSEA TRIUMPH IN BAKU

Hazard shines in half-empty stadium

Pointing the way... Olivier Giroud marks Chelsea's opener

Four English clubs monopolising the two European club Finals was historic. The only surprise, as efficient Chelsea kicked off the Premier League party by swatting away a poor Arsenal, is that the football powers in Germany, Spain and Italy had managed to prevent it until now.

The Premier League is the richest in the game, with its clubs generating a record £4.5billion last year. English clubs can pay the highest transfer fees and wages, thus they are able to appoint many of the best coaches and sign most of the best players.

Logic and the law of averages suggest that English clubs should have more success than any other country in European club competition. But UEFA has only itself to blame for events this past season after its own rule change back in 2016.

That was when it granted Champions League access to the Europa League holders. The change induced a shift of thinking in the Premier League, persuading clubs to view the Europa League as a serious competition not a Thursday-night nuisance worthy only of the reserve team. Hence more money was worth spending on squad depth.

Chelsea's Brazilian defender David Luiz explained how the evolution of the last few years has been evidenced out on the pitch. He says: "When I came here in 2011 nobody wanted me to play the ball out from the back, everybody wanted to kick it long. Now everybody understands.

"Look at the top six teams in England: they are all teams who play the ball out from the back, play a possession game, try to create right from the feet of the goalkeepers.

"Football is about gaining time: if you put the ball in the air, you lose time. That's why we all now try to build from the back, to give the players with the

Baku party... Chelsea celebrate

talent the time to receive the ball between the lines. It's evolution.

"In modern football, the first defenders are the strikers, and the first attacker is the goalkeeper."

First attacker maybe but the match-decider attacker in Baku was Eden Hazard in what proved his last Chelsea appearance before his transfer to Real Madrid. Chelsea will find him hard to replace, particularly with the complications of a FIFA transfer ban hanging over their head for breaching youth registration regulations (which the club deny).

Only one English player, Arsenal's midfielder Ainsley Maitland-Niles, started a showdown played under a cloud of controversy over the distance of the half-empty venue and the political dispute with Armenia which prevented the Gunners bringing midfielder Henrikh Mkhitaryan.

Arsenal were chasing a first European trophy since they won the now-defunct Cup-winners Cup back in 1994 and began with greater determination. First Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang bounced a shot wide after a sloppy punch clear from Kepa Arrizabalaga, then the Chelsea keeper was fortunate not to concede a penalty after diving at the feet of Alexandre Lacazette.

Arsenal, whose manager Unai Emery had won the trophy three times with Sevilla, went close again after 27 minutes when Granit Xhaka's right-foot drive from 25 metres which clipped the top of the crossbar. Arrizabalaga, at £70million the world's most expensive keeper, struggled in vain to stretch a finger to the ball.

Chelsea always carried a threat on the counter-attack. In the 39th minute Olivier Giroud saw a low drive pushed to safety by Petr Cech, the 37-year-old making his last appearance ahead of retirement.

Arsenal, perhaps lulled into a false sense of security, were not prepared for the manner in which Chelsea stepped up the pace after the interval. Three goals in the opening 20 minutes of the second half from Giroud, Pedro and Hazard (penalty) killed them off.

French World Cup-winner Giroud headed Chelsea into the lead from Emerson's angled assist with his top-scoring 11th goal of the European campaign. Then Spanish forward Pedro struck Chelsea's second after neat inter-passing between Mateo Kovacic and Hazard before the Belgian struck the third from a penalty after Giroud was felled by Maitland-Niles.

The quality gap between the teams appeared far greater than the mere two Premier League points which had separated third-placed Chelsea and the fifth-placed Gunners.

Alex Iwobi struck an Arsenal consolation but then Hazard tucked away a counter-attacking second goal to become the first player to score twice for an English club in a European Final since Mark Hughes in Manchester United's 2-0 win over Barcelona in the 1991 Cup-winners Cup.

Manager Maurizio Sarri – while pondering his own possible departure – could afford to offer Hazard the honour of a fans' salute with an early exit in the 89th minute. As a swansong it could hardly have been bettered.

Keir Radnedge

Under pressure... Arsenal clear another Chelsea attack

> "We played very good football against a very difficult opponent. We played 15 matches, we won 12 and drew three, so I think we deserve to win the Europa League"
>
> **Chelsea manager Maurizio Sarri**

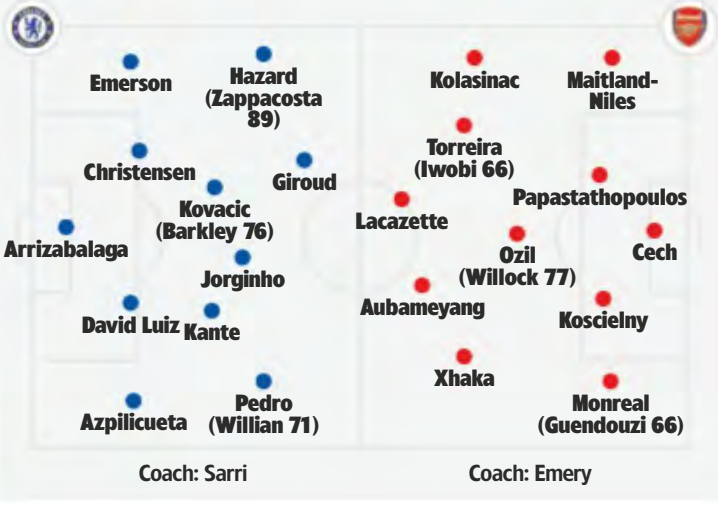
Departing star...Eden Hazard (left) with Pedro

2019 EUROPA LEAGUE FINAL

May 28 – Baku (Aze)

CHELSEA (Giroud 49, Pedro 60, Hazard 65pen, 72)	**4**
ARSENAL (Iwobi 69)	**1**

HT: 0-0. Att: 51,370. Ref: Rocchi (Italy)



Coach: Sarri — Coach: Emery

WHAT THEY SAID

MAURIZIO SARRI *(Chelsea manager)*
"My feeling at the end of the first half was that the match was very difficult. It was our 64th match of the season and it was hot on the pitch, very difficult to play physically. At half-time I asked my players to play with more courage, even if it meant risking to lose.

"I wanted my team to move the ball better, and the players did it very well in the second half. We played very good football against a very difficult opponent.

"In the Europa League we played 15 matches, we won 12 and drew three, so I think we deserve to win the Europa League.

"To be the first trophy of my career is not so important for me but is important for the club."

EDEN HAZARD *(Chelsea)*
"My dream was to play in Premier League, I did this for seven years in one of the biggest clubs in the world so now it's time for a new challenge.

"In the first half both teams had a bit of stress because the final is something big for both teams but when Oli [Giroud] scored I think it was the beginning of a great night. We played well second half, they had a few chances at the end when it was 4-1, but we controlled the game."

UNAI EMERY *(Arsenal manager)*
"We are calm and I am positive for our future. We are a big team and Arsenal are a big name in the football world. This time I must say that Chelsea deserved to win. We got to the box with good options and chances to score but the first goal changed the game.

"We are in one process and we need to be strong in our way. The idea at the start [of the season] was to get more competitive as a team, get closer to the other teams, and we did that. It is not enough yet, but next season we have to continue in this way."

PETR CECH *(Arsenal)*
"I'm proud of the way I played because when you play your last career game in the Final there is a lot of pressure and speculation. We worked so hard all year to finish with nothing.

"This group of players do not deserve it because of how much work has been done this season.

"It is easy to say we finished empty-handed but I can assure everyone that the work we have done will mean this team comes back much stronger next year."

SEMI-FINAL
June 5 – Porto Dragao

PORTUGAL (Ronaldo 25, 88, 90) **3**

SWITZERLAND (57pen) **1**

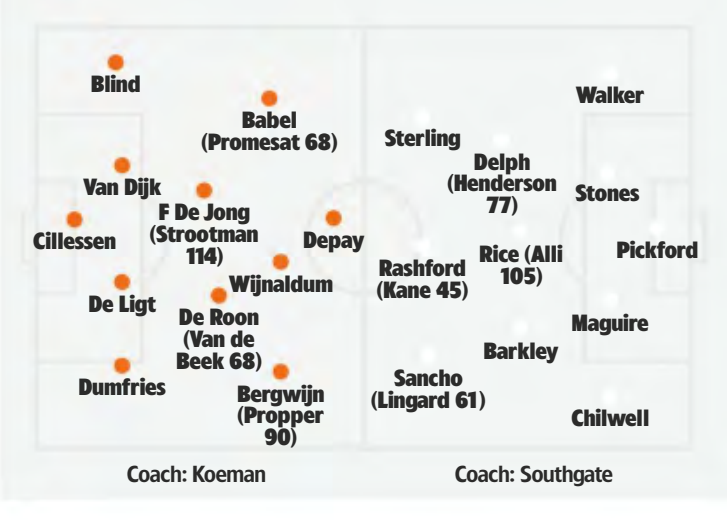
HT:1-0 Ref: Brych (Ger) Att: 42,415

SEMI-FINAL
June 5 – Guimaraes

HOLLAND (De Ligt 72, Walker 97og, Promes 114) **3**

ENGLAND **1** (Rashford 32pen)

HT: 0-1 Ref: Att:



Equaliser...De Ligt heads Holland level

PORTUGAL TRIUMPH ON HOME SOIL

More to come from the happy hosts

Being the first winners of the Nations League is a joyous moment for the Portuguese people. "We will go down in history," said coach Fernando Santos moments after his team had conquered Europe for the second time in three years. And there was not much sign it was a secondary trophy s tens of thousands of *Selecao* fans packed into Porto's Praca dos Aliados to welcome the team and revel in victory late into the night.

The triumphant atmosphere was an echo of the Euro 2016 celebrations – and Santos promised there is more to come: "This is a team of the future. It's a continuous process and we have shown what Portuguese football is all about. The future is in safe hands."

It is difficult to argue with him, such was the authority with which a youthful Portugal team had seen off Holland in the Final at the Estadio do Dragao. Six of the starting XI were aged 25 or under. Goal-scorer Goncalo Guedes and centre-back Ruben Dias – the official man of the match – are just 22.

And it is two 24-year-olds who will surely provide the key to extending a golden era for the national team.

The wonderfully effervescent, imaginative and industrious midfield pairing of Bernardo Silva and Bruno Fernandes had kept Portugal on the front foot throughout the 90 minutes. It was a performance in marked contrast to a style of play which has for so long been the template for the *Selecao*, based on soaking up pressure and counter-attacking.

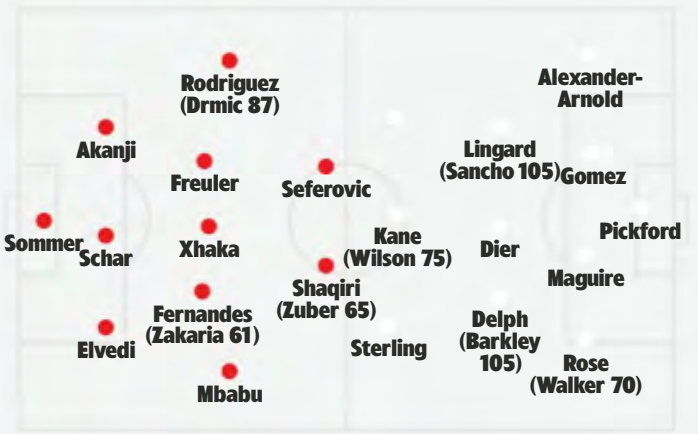
Despite guiding Portugal to an unprecedented triumph at Euro 2016, Santos had been facing increasing criticism for his failure to harness the

3RD PLACE PLAY-OFF
June 9 – Guimaraes

SWITZERLAND	0
ENGLAND	0

(England 6-5 on pens)

HT: 0-0 Ref: Hategan (Rom) Att:15,742



Coach: Petkovic Coach: Southgate

Winner...Goncalo Guedes scores the goal that wins the first-ever UEFA Nations League Final

potential of the exciting attacking talent at his disposal. The veteran coach shed his conservative image in the final four stage of the new UEFA competition, selecting an attacking line-up for the semi-final against Switzerland that included Benfica's teenage sensation Joao Felix.

It was a "new Portugal", yet what transpired was a display typical of the "old Portugal", who had to rely on another masterclass from Cristiano Ronaldo to make the Final. A majestic hat-trick from the captain masked a disjointed display in which the Swiss were on top for long periods. Santos put the lack of cohesion down to the fact it was a team unused to playing with one another, and stuck by largely the same line-up for the decisive game. The players' response proved him right with many local analysts opining it was Portugal's finest display under Santos.

Ronaldo was almost a peripheral figure in the final, the headlines for once hogged by his team-mates. The nature of the winning goal is illustrative of how the new generation are unlikely to be inhibited or overawed by playing alongside the country's greatest ever player – a conspicuous characteristic of Portugal for much of the past decade. When Bernardo Silva cut the ball back to Guedes at the top of the penalty box a shooting opportunity opened up, but Ronaldo was completely free to his right. In Portugal teams past, it is almost certain the natural sequence of the move would involve a pass to the captain, but a confident Guedes instead took it upon himself to go for goal, producing an explosive finish that was too hot for Dutch goalkeeper Jasper Cillessen to keep out.

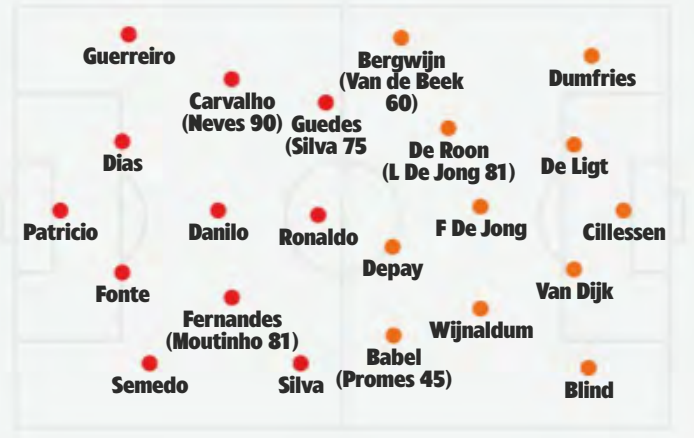
With the new generation coming to the fore, but Ronaldo still able to produce the goods, the *Selecao* look to be in a good position to defend their European Championship crown next year.

Tom Kundert

FINAL
June 9 – Porto Dragao

PORTUGAL (Guedes 60)	1
HOLLAND	0

(HT: 0-0 Ref: Mallenco (Spa) Att: 43,199)



Coach: Santos Coach: Koeman

GAVIN HAMILTON

Man City make English history

But Europe remains out of reach

Manchester City made history by becoming the first team in England to win a domestic treble of League, FA Cup and League Cup. But despite the exciting football played by Pep Guardiola's team, City's middle eastern owners have struggled to overcome accusations of "sportswashing" and "reputation laundering".

Like their Qatari counterparts at Paris Saint-Germain, City's Emirati owners have been accused of using their vast wealth to distort the competitive balance of the Premier League. Sheikh Mansour's investment in City has now passed £1.3billion since 2008 and City have again attracted the attentions of UEFA's Financial Fairplay watchdog.

The other side of the very expensive coin is that Abu Dhabi's millions have produced a football team coached by Guardiola that has played some mesmerising football, culminating in a 6-0 annihilation of Watford in the FA Cup Final.

That the Wembley whitewash was City's final game of the season – and not the Champions League Final – will have been a source of regret for the club's hierarchy, who remain desperate for success in Europe.

Final...Manchester City thrashed Watford

Domestically, City got the better of a Liverpool team who, strengthened by the accusation of goalkeeper Alisson, would have been worthy champions themselves, especially as their 98 points total would have been good enough to win the title in many previous seasons.

The title race went right to the wire, with City edging Liverpool by a single point. In the end, the gap between the two teams came down to a matter of millimetres – 11 to be precise. That was the distance by which the ball failed to cross the line when City defender John Stones made a miraculous clearance in the 2-1 defeat of Liverpool in January.

Similarly in the final few weeks of the campaign, City striker Sergio Aguero scored the winning goal against Burnley with a goal that crossed the line by just 29 millimetres. City's victory at Burnley was typical of the title run-in, where the top two continued to match each other's victories and pull away from the rest of the pack as the other four teams all fell away in the final few two months.

Tottenham Hotspur's European feats were achieved despite injuries, which exposed their lack of squad depth and again highlighted the extent of Mauricio Pochettino's achievements in taking Spurs so far while spending so little. Their new stadium has rightly many plaudits but its cost may restrict Tottenham's financial powers for some years to come.

Chelsea were inconsistent in the league but reached two cup Finals under Maurizio Sarri in his first and probably only season in England. Difficult times lie ahead, with a global transfer ban and the sale of their best player Eden Hazard to Real Madrid.

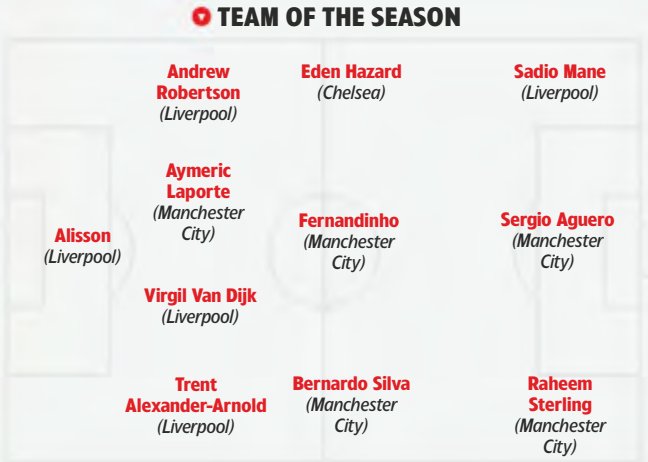
Vital...John Stones denies Liverpool

Arsenal regained some sort of mojo under Unai Emery but their meek surrender to Chelsea in the Europa League Final in Baku closed off the last remaining route to the Champions League.

Manchester United remain a box-office attraction, but probably for all the wrong reasons. Ole Gunnar Solskjaer made a

THE BREAKDOWN

TEAM OF THE SEASON



CUP FINAL
Manchester City steamrollered Watford, winning 6-0 in one of the most one-sided Finals ever. With all of the top-six bar City knocked out early on in the competition, Watford, in their first Final since 1984, had high hopes of an upset.

EUROPEAN QUALIFIERS
Man City, Liverpool, Tottenham and Chelsea all qualified for the Champions League group stages, while Arsenal and Manchester United go into the Europa League, along with Wolves, back in Europe for the first time in 38 years.

RELEGATED AND PROMOTED TEAMS
Huddersfield Town, Fulham and Cardiff City went down after struggling all season. Norwich City and Sheffield United return to the top flight after three and eight years respectively, along with Aston Villa, play-off winners over Derby County.

PLAYER OF THE SEASON
Raheem Sterling excelled for Manchester City, adding regular goals to his skillset. He also conducted himself with maturity and conviction off the pitch, notably when challenging the media's negative portrayal of black players.

City defender John Stones made a miraculous clearance in the 2-1 defeat of Liverpool in January

promising start following the sacking of Jose Mourinho but he struggled amid claims of dressing-room unrest.

Commercially, the club is still hugely successful for its owner, the Glazer family and their representative in Manchester, Ed Woodward, but the footballing problems run deep. Woodward remains in charge of transfer business, but the need for an independent-minded director of football is greater than ever.

The top six are fast becoming an economic entity in their own right – and the gap is set to get wider with new overseas TV money being allocated to the big-budget clubs, breaking the previous equitable distribution model.

So the achievement of Wolves in finishing seventh in their first season back in the top flight following promotion was exceptional. They spent lots of money, often on clients of agent Jorge Mendes, but Portuguese coach Nuno fashioned an exciting team that were seconds away from reaching an FA Cup Final.

Wolves headed a cluster of clubs with ambitions of a Europa League place – the likes of Everton, Leicester City, Watford, West Ham United – but that and the Cup competitions will remain the extent of their ambitions.

Below them, all the clubs looked down rather than up, although the relegations for Huddersfield Town, Fulham and Cardiff City were rarely in doubt. Southampton rallied under Ralph Hassenhuttl, Burnley wobbled after last season's run to the Europa League fixtures, while Brighton & Hove Albion's poor run in the closing stages of the campaign prompted the close-season sacking of Chris Hughton. WS

Down...Cardiff (in blue) and Fulham

COACH OF THE SEASON
Pep Guardiola has been handed vast resources at Manchester City but his side played a brand of attacking football that nobody could match. His attention to detail and devotion to perfection remains as sharp as ever.

NEWCOMER OF THE SEASON
Exciting winger Callum Hudson-Odoi found opportunities at Chelsea limited but still became England's youngest debutant, aged 18 and 135 days. Injury ruled him out of Chelsea's Europa League Final and England's Nations League matches.

Euro bound... Wolverhampton Wanderers

PSG on top again but are going backwards

European success looks further out of reach than ever

It will surprise no one that Paris Saint-Germain won their sixth Ligue 1 title in seven years. But what is an eyebrow-raiser is that, overall, the French giants regressed during the campaign.

The club's ultra-ambitious Qatari owners have made no secret of their desire to claim the Champions League trophy sooner rather than later. That's why Spanish coach Unai Emery was given his marching orders even after winning a domestic treble last year. His replacement, Thomas Tuchel, came in from Borussia Dortmund with a sky-high reputation, yet only delivered one meaningful trophy, the league title.

Tuchel began the season with a 4-0 win against Monaco in the Trophee des Champions. PSG then broke the record for the most consecutive wins at the start of any Ligue 1 campaign with 14, while topping their Champions League group ahead of Liverpool, Napoli and Red Star Belgrade.

But as 2018 rolled into 2019, the wheels started to come off. Tuchel saw his side crash out of the League Cup against soon-to-be-relegated Guingamp in the quarter-finals, then suffer a penalty shoot-out defeat in the Coupe de France Final against Rennes at the end of April. Sandwiched in between was a limp exit in the Champions League round of 16 to a struggling Manchester United.

This was not what Nasser El Khelaifi had envisioned his German coach delivering when he gave the 45-year-old Tuchel a two-year contract last May.

Yes, PSG ended up clinching the Ligue 1 title with 91 points, fully 16 points ahead of second-placed Lille, but this is a club that demands much more than domestic league dominance.

Tuchel wasn't slow in justifying PSG's disappointing overall campaign, citing injuries to Neymar and Edinson Cavani, as well as disciplinary issues with Adrien Rabiot. And as the season concluded, Tuchel extended his contract to 2021, which suggests El Khelaifi still believes in him. However, the pressure to deliver something spectacular and prove that PSG can become something more than the Harlem Globetrotters of football is well and truly on.

What's certain is that Lille coach Christophe Galtier won't be feeling the pressure like Tuchel after the season he had. The former Saint-Etienne boss took over at Lille in December 2017 with the club in 18th place and saved them from relegation by the skin of their teeth. But he transformed their fortunes this season, leading the team to a second place and, watching them beat PSG 5-1 along the way. With a solid defence and an exciting, attack-oriented approach, *Les Dogues* can look back on their campaign with real satisfaction.

Not so Monaco, who swapped second place in 2018 for a disastrous 17th this term. With Portuguese coach Leonardo

Cup Final goal...Rennes' Mexer celebrates

Champions...PSG salute their fans

THE BREAKDOWN

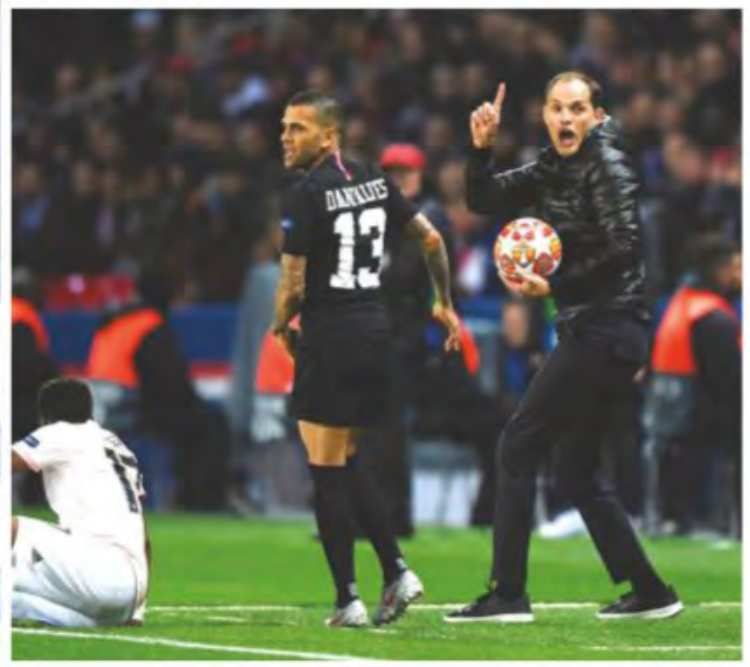
TEAM OF THE SEASON

THE CUP FINAL
Rennes upset the odds against PSG in April when they came from 2-0 down to force extra time. With no further goals, they didn't miss in the shoot-out so when Christophe Nkunku's skied his side's sixth effort Rennes were home and dry.

EUROPEAN QUALIFIERS
PSG, Lille and Lyon qualified for the Champions League group stage, while Saint Etienne go into the group stage of the Europa League, along with Rennes. Strasbourg won the League Cup and will play in the second qualifying round of the Europa League.

RELEGATED AND PROMOTED TEAMS
Guingamp finished bottom of the pile and Caen will join them in Ligue 2. Relegated from the top flight in 2018, Metz bounced back at the first time of asking, claiming the Ligue 2 title, seven points ahead of Brest, who are also promoted.

PLAYER OF THE SEASON
PSG's Kylian Mbappe again demonstrated that he's the real deal, with 33 goals in 29 league games. In the absence of Neymar, his dynamite mix of blistering pace, high-skill levels and cool finishing make him the complete attacking package.



Tuchel extended his contract by a year to 2021, which suggests that El Khelaifi still believes in him

Jardim sacked in early October following a rotten start to a campaign that yielded just one win in their opening 12 matches, Monaco turned to 1998 World Cup winner Thierry Henry to get the club back on track. But after just four wins in his 20 games in charge, Henry was sacked in January. His replacement? None other than Jardim. Monaco finished their awful campaign just two points off the relegation play-off spot.

Lyon grabbed third place but fans were deeply unhappy with the style of play under Bruno Genesio. Club president Jean-Michel Aulas has never been one to bow to supporter pressure and as the season wore on it became increasingly obvious that changes would have to be made. Brazilian management team of sporting director Juninho and coach Sylvinho will take control this summer.

Despite reaching the Europa League Final in 2018, Marseille never looked like challenging PSG's domestic dominance. The arrival of Mario Balotelli on loan from Nice in January gave the fans something to shout about, but OM finished the campaign with a whimper rather than a bang. A fifth-place finish won't have pleased anyone, especially as that means no European football next season

Down at the bottom of the table, Guingamp and Caen fell through the trap door, while Dijon – who looked dead and buried when bottom of the table with just eight games to go – managed to scramble their way into a promotion/relegation play-off with a nail-biting last-day victory over Toulouse.

Facing former powerhouse Lens, who are coached by former Nottingham Forest boss Philippe Montanier, Dijon won 4-2 on aggregate to stay in Ligue 1 and extend the exile of a club who were last in the top flight in 2015. WS

COACH OF THE SEASON
For once Jose Mourinho wasn't wrong when he stated that Lille boss Christophe Galtier was his coach of the season. Why? "For getting them into the Champions League, for the quality of their football and for the development of their young players."

Off...Nicolas Pepe

NEWCOMER OF THE SEASON
Ivory Coast forward Nicolas Pepe may not have won any silverware but his 22 goals and 11 assists helped Lille bag second spot in the table, giving them Champions League football in the process. It's already been confirmed he will be sold.

Bayern make it seven in a row

But Dortmund push them all the way

For the seventh consecutive season, Bayern Munich were the first vehicle across the Bundesliga finishing line, albeit with the odd puncture and mechanical breakdown en route.

By Bayern's stringent standards, it was a distinctly sub-par campaign. More often than not, the football they produced was gritty and functional rather than eye-catching, and in a two-month period last autumn the Bavarians were very poor, losing to Hertha Berlin, Borussia Monchengladbach and arch-rivals Borussia Dortmund, and carelessly dropping points in drawn home games with Freiburg and Fortuna Dusseldorf.

As the winter winds kicked in, Bayern's chances of another title were registering below zero. While Dortmund were sweeping all before them, down south in Munich the overwhelming impression was that of a club going nowhere. In late November they were placed as low as fifth and by mid-December they trailed leaders Dortmund by a whopping nine points.

Little wonder coach Niko Kovac was coming under such heavy fire in the media. His team was failing in more or less every category, their attacking play was disjointed and ponderous, defensively they were all at sea and, most unusually for a Bayern side, their self-assured swagger had disappeared.

Revolutionary whispers filled the dressing room. The bulk of the squad were simply not buying into Kovac's methods and philosophy: his instinctively cautious mindset, preference for playing on the counter and insistence on extensively rotating his personnel from week to week. There were even reports of a cabal of superstars – the likes of Mats Hummels, Thomas Muller, Arjen Robben and Franck Ribery – actively calling for his head.

Leaving...one last Bundesliga title for (from left) Arjen Robben, Rafinha and Franck Ribery

Out of touch and out of sorts, Bayern looked like the Christmas goose about to be plucked. Yet somehow the side managed to pull itself together, bit by bit gaining ground on a nervy Dortmund and eventually overhauling them. Kovac and company would eventually seal the deal with a 5-1 home victory over Eintracht Frankfurt on the final weekend of the season. Cue a huge sigh of relief in the Allianz-Arena.

With the pressure very much on, Bayern proved absolutely relentless in the post-winter break period. They were the unstoppable juggernaut with 13 wins in 17 Bundesliga games, just one loss – a 3-1 defeat at Bayer Leverkusen in February – and they scored 52 goals. The key moment in the championship race was a 5-0 mauling of the visiting

THE BREAKDOWN

TEAM OF THE SEASON

CUP FINAL
Bayern Munich secured the double after beating RB Leipzig 3-0 in the Cup Final in Berlin. Bayern coach Niko Kovac became the first man to win the double as player and coach and the first coach to win the Cup in successive years with different clubs.

EUROPEAN QUALIFIERS
The top four – Bayern Munich, Borussia Dortmund, RB Leipzig and Bayern Leverkusen – all qualify for the Champions League group stages, while Monchengladbach, Wolfsburg and Eintracht Frankfurt enter the Europa League.

RELEGATION/ PROMOTION
Hanover and Nuremberg were both relegated while third-from-bottom Stuttgart lost a tight relegation play-off to Union Berlin, who joined Cologne and Padorborn in the top flight. It was Padorborn's second promotion in a row.

PLAYER OF THE SEASON
If Marco Reus had not missed several games through illness, injury and "new father" duties, Dortmund might just have had enough to pip Bayern to the title. "Marco is the star we set our course by," says the club's CEO, Hans-Joachim Watzke.

Dortmunder in early April. It was billed as a titanic clash of near-equals. Instead, Bayern were 4-0 up at half-time; it was men against boys.

Several factors contributed to Bayern's new year renaissance. The mood in the camp undoubtedly improved when Kovac decided in December to stop shuffling his first-team pack at every opportunity. A cocktail of fear and wounded pride made for an effective mid-term pick-me-up. Nor should one not forget the excellent "Spring Championship" work of various individual players, not least midfielders Thiago Alcantara and Javi Martinez, wingers Kingsley Coman and Serge Gnabry, and striker Robert Lewandowski, who once again topped the league's scoring charts, scoring 22 times.

To coin a popular sports psychology phrase, runners-up Dortmund can "'take many positives" from the campaign. Taking their cues from Jadon Sancho and skipper Marco Reus, the Ruhr outfit were in an euphoric state of grace during the first-half of the season, dazzling with their inventiveness, front-foot punch and spirit. Given Dortmund's youth and relative inexperience – the average age of their side is around 24 – they did extremely well to end up just two points shy of the championship spoils.

If truth be told, Dortmund were not quite mature enough to see off a somewhat faltering Bayern. As the latter whittled away at their once-substantial cushion at the top of the table, the black-and-yellows became more and more edgy, increasingly displaying a soft defensive underbelly. A championship-winning side has to have a rock-solid rearguard and sadly Dortmund did not possess one.

That said, it was still a memorable first season at the Westfalenstadion for coach Lucien Favre. It's no easy task to build a highly competitive side from scratch and it says much for the expertise of the Swiss strategist that he was able to do so in double-quick time. He had his team of fledglings flying from day one. A miracle of pre-season planning and attention to detail.

Dortmund insist they'll go one step further next season and no one should doubt their resolve. But will Bayern be as vulnerable as they were this term? The most likely answer is no. WS

COACH OF THE SEASON
In two seasons, Florian Kohfeldt has transformed Werder Bremen from relegation candidates into a resourceful top-10 outfit who were unfortunate to miss out on Europa League qualification. He is an outstanding promoter of young talent.

Promoter...Kohfeldt

NEWCOMER OF THE SEASON
On loan from Watford, Belgo-Congolese striker Dodi Lukebakio enjoyed himself immensely at Fortuna Dusseldorf, running riot with his dribbling skills and netting a memorable hat-trick in a 3-3 draw at Bayern Munich in November.

Battle...Bayern's Mats Hummels (in red) beats Dan-Axel Zagadou of Borussia Dortmund

Juventus make it eight in a row

But celebrations are flat after European exit

There was a cruel, if poetic justice about the manner in which Juventus wrapped up a 35th league title with a 2-1 home win against Fiorentina. Notwithstanding the fact that, for many reasons, this was an historic night, there was a strangely anti-climatic feel to the occasion.

The Turin powerhouse had just become the first club from the big five European leagues to win eight consecutive domestic titles. Furthermore, Cristiano Ronaldo had just become the first player to have won the Premier League, La Liga and Serie A treble.

And yet even though Colombian star Juan Cuadrado jumped around like a crazy man, spraying white foam on the heads of team-mates and coach Massimiliano Allegri, these celebrations somehow looked just a tad ritualistic.

The point is that, four days earlier, Juventus had crashed out of the Champions League, eliminated in a quarter-final tie by Ajax. When Juventus sprang the "transfer of the century" last July, hiring Ronaldo from Real Madrid in a €340million deal, the idea seemed to be that he would represent the "icing" on the lavish Juve cake, the guy who would make that ultimate "difference". That difference and that icing had a very clear name – the Champions League.

That Champions League failure probably weighed heavily too on the surprise Juventus decision to part company with coach Allegri. You could argue that five consecutive Serie A titles, four Italian Cups and two (losing) Champions League Finals in five seasons represents good enough grounds to renew a fruitful working relationship. Not this year in Turin, apparently...

As for Juve's domestic dominance, perhaps the best comment on that came recently from Czech coach Zdenek Zeman in an interview with *La Gazzetta dello Sport* in which he said: "For eight years now, the league title contest is over before it has even begun."

In truth, this was a disappointing Serie A season in which no side came even remotely close to challenging Juventus.

Failure...Juventus lose to Ajax

Contract row...Inter's Icardi

THE BREAKDOWN

TEAM OF THE SEASON

Alex Sandro (Juventus)
Aleksandar Kolarov (Roma)
Miralem Pjanic (Juventus)
Cristiano Ronaldo (Juventus)
Samir Handanovic (Inter)
Kalidou Koulibaly (Napoli)
Alejandro Gomez (Atalanta)
Fabio Quagliarella (Sampdoria)
Emre Can (Juventus)
Leonardo Bonucci (Juventus)
Nicolo Zaniolo (Roma)

CUP FINAL
A dour, intense match in which the prize at stake mattered too much for both sides. Two goals in the last eight minutes from Sergei Milinkovic and Joaquin Correa won it for Lazio against Atalanta in Rome's Stadio Olimpico.

EUROPEAN QUALIFIERS
Juventus, Napoli, Atalanta and Internazionale all enter the knockout stage of the Champions League. Milan and Cup-winners Lazio go into the Europa League group stage while Roma will take part in the qualifying round.

RELEGATION/ PROMOTION
Empoli, Frosinone, and Chievo dropped out of Serie A. Brescia were promoted from Serie B after eight seasons away, while Lecce (seven years away) won a second successive promotion. Verona beat Cittadella in the promotion play-off.

PLAYER OF THE SEASON
Arguably the jewel in the Atalanta crown, Alejandro Gomez is a wonderful, complete talent. Beautifully balanced, able to play off either foot, the diminutive midfielder is a coach's dream. Scores vital goals, sets up vital goals and wins vital balls.

Eight in a row...Juve players celebrate

The only realistic pretenders to the crown, namely Napoli and Internazionale, for different reasons underperformed in the face of a relentless Juventus. In effect, Juve encountered only two real setbacks in the course of the season – their 3-0 Italian Cup, quarter-final elimination by Atalanta in January and, of course, much more significantly, their Champions League elimination by Ajax.

Carlo Ancelotti, in his first season in Naples, did not match the performance of his predecessor, Maurizio Sarri. Initial hopes that he might open up a new "cycle" at Napoli were not realised. Perhaps, in Ancelotti's second season, his squad will deliver the quality football of which it seems more than capable.

Napoli, at least, had their Champions League qualification wrapped up long before the end of the season. Which is more than can be said for Inter, who went right down to the last minute of their final game 2-1 win over Empoli before securing their fourth place finish behind Juventus, Napoli and Atalanta.

In hindsight, you would have to conclude that Inter's contract renewal differences with their star striker Mauro Icardi cost both them and the player dear. With Internazionale replacing Luciano Spalletti with former Juventus, Italy and Chelsea coach, Antonio Conte, it would appear that the Icardi fracas certainly did Spalletti no favours.

> "For eight years now, the league title contest is over even before it has begun"
>
> Former Roma coach Zdenek Zeman

One way or another, this summer looks certain to be dominated with talk of all the top coaching jobs in Italian football. Milan have already parted company with Gennaro Gattuso, Roma have said thanks to caretaker Claudio Ranieri (having already sacked Eusebio Di Francesco in March) and replaced him with Paulo Fonseca, while the biggest job of all, that at Juventus, is up for grabs.

This was, too, a season marked by a disappointing Italian showing in European competition, with no Italian team making it to the semi-final stages of either the Champions League or Europa League.

As the curtain came down on the season, hats off to 38-year-old Andrea Barzagli of Juventus, to 37-year-old Emiliano Moretti of Torino and to 40-year-old Sergio Pellissier of Chievo, all of whom retired in May.

Hats off, too, to Sampdoria's Fabio Quagliarella who at the ripe old age of 36 topped the Serie A goalscorers chart with 26 goals. WS

Cup triumph...Lazio

COACH OF THE SEASON
Even if Lazio's Simone Inzaghi deserves an award for his consistently competitive, Italian Cup-winning side, coach of the season just has to be Gian Piero Gasperini. His Atalanta were heroic in defying wealthier, theoretically more powerful rivals.

NEWCOMER OF THE SEASON
Two 19-year-olds burst onto the scene, namely Roma midfielder Nicola Zaniolo and Juventus striker Moise Kean. Both seem destined for important club careers and have already made a significant impact in the senior Italy side.

SID LOWE

Barca season ends with a whimper

Messi inspires another title win but Valencia and Liverpool end treble hopes

At the very end of a season unlike any he had ever experienced before, Valencia coach Marcelino Garcia Toral sat there wearing a smile twice as wide as his face. Outside the Benito Villamarin stadium in Seville, it was late, it was hot and the fans were singing, celebrating winning the Copa del Rey – their first trophy in 11 years.

For Marcelino, at 53, it was a first ever. He had never even beaten Barcelona before. Now, at last, he had – and in a Final. Valencia's centenary season had culminated in triumph. "We won!" Marcelino grinned, slapping at the desk as if it was a set of bongo drums.

"I feel an immense happiness that's impossible to describe; you feel like laughing." And so he did.

"Inexplicable," he called it. And for much of the season, an end like this had been implausible. There were moments when even reaching the end seemed impossible for Marcelino. At the halfway stage they were just four points above the relegation zone and he thought he would be sacked.

Summoned to Singapore to see the owner, Peter Lim, the end appeared near. Yet when he got there, director general Mateu Alemany fought his coach's corner and saved his job. The revival began. And five months on, Valencia claimed the last Champions League place – they had only been in it six days all season – and won the cup, beating Barcelona 2-1. Was this a lesson, Marcelino was asked. Patience a virtue? "For sure," he said.

For Barca, there were many lessons to be learnt, but will they? After all, it had happened again. Now, there was nothing much they could say, just sadness. Three weeks earlier, they had been on course for a treble, but Liverpool had knocked them out of the Champions League, just as Roma had done 12 months before, and now they had lost the cup Final too.

"We have a bad feeling now, there's no point in pretending otherwise," said coach Ernesto Valverde. "The players are empty; they have given everything."

The first question in the post-match press conference began "sorry for your loss" and then asked if he deserved to carry on. Shouldn't he be sacked? Valverde slapped it away then added, sarcastically: "Thanks for your condolences, though."

Some supporters would suggest he should be sacked. Barcelona's defeat at

Revival...Santi Cazorla

THE BREAKDOWN

TEAM OF THE SEASON

CUP FINAL
Valencia's 2-1 win over Barcelona in Seville ended their double hopes. Kevin Gameiro fired in a superb strike to give Valencia the lead and Rodrigo headed in a second. Messi's 73rd-minute strike gave Barca hope but they fell short.

EUROPEAN QUALIFIERS
Barcelona, Atletico, Real Madrid and Valencia all qualified for the Champions League group stages. Getafe and Sevilla made the Europa League groups. Espanyol, in the Europa qualifiers, return to European action for the first time in a decade.

RELEGATION/ PROMOTION
Rayo Vallecano, Huesca and Girona were all relegated to the second tier, with Osasuna and Granada returning to the top flight. Malaga, Albacete, Mallorca and Deportivo La Coruna were involved in the play-offs for the last promotion place.

PLAYER OF THE YEAR
Lionel Messi was on a different level to everyone else again. His performances for Barcelona were so far above the rest it was almost silly at times, with Betis fans handing him a standing ovation in March after another incredible performance.

Anfield hurt, and this deepened the pain, the disaster. For the first time in 1,456 days, they weren't the Copa del Rey holders. They had "only" won the league. They had won it by a long way, too, reinforcing their domestic dominance. But if that made it better, it also made it worse: this was just "normal", some thought. This was Barcelona's eighth title of the last 11. Madrid have two, Atletico one. And the gap was huge. Led by Lionel Messi, Barcelona finished 11 points above Atletico and a staggering 19 over Madrid, who they had hammered 5-1 in October.

This was Barcelona's biggest-ever margin over their rivals and Madrid's campaign could hardly have been worse. "We can't have a cock-up every game," Luka Modric said. They went through three coaches and spent the last three months drifting to a conclusion that no one wanted, an irrelevance.

As for Atletico, they briefly pushed, but were beaten at the Camp Nou and Barcelona tied it up early. So much so that Valverde was asked which week he would like to win the league in. "What I like is that you can ask that," he replied, but within a couple of weeks the smile had gone. All the season had been built

Champions again...Barcelona

towards the European Cup and now they hadn't even got the Spanish Cup.

In the end, the worst were Rayo, Huesca and Girona, relegated to the second division. The best stories lay elsewhere, starting with Santi Cazorla's incredible, inspiring comeback: injury and infection had threatened to see him lose his leg, 10cm of achilles tendon rotten away. At the end of a season in which he had started 30 league games, and eventually secured first division survival for Villarreal, he returned to the Spain squad after a four-year absence.

Then there was Athletic Bilbao's revival: from relegation to within a crossbar in the 93rd minute of the final day from getting a European place. Espanyol getting back into Europe, more than a decade later. Iago Aspas' extraordinary one-man rescue mission at Celta Vigo – there may be no player as important for his club anywhere in Spain.

And, above all, there was Getafe. For 23 minutes on the final day they were in a Champions League place.

In the end they missed out, Valencia overtaking them, but it was still a gigantic achievement. And so, on the final day, they partied too. WS

COACH OF THE YEAR
"Bordalas, I love you!" Getafe fans sang, and how could they not? Coach Pepe Bordalas led the tiny team from the southern Madrid sleeper town into the Europa League. And they were minutes away from making a debut in the Champions League.

Leader...Pepe Bordalas

NEWCOMER OF THE YEAR
Getafe forward Jaime Mata made it to the Spain squad at the ripe old age of 30 after years bumping along in the lower divisions of Spanish football. "It was already bloody amazing for me just playing in Tercera [the regionalised fifth tier]," he said.

Cup upset...Valencia celebrate

Glenn Moore

Hegerberg leads OL to another title

Peerless Lyon sweep past Final debutants

Having long decided she would not be joining Norway at the World Cup, Ada Hegerberg knew the Champions League had to be her stage this year, and she stole the show with a leading role. The Ballon d'Or winner, who has not played for her country for two years in protest at the national federation's treatment of female players, scored a 17-minute hat-trick in Budapest as Lyon brushed aside Barcelona to secure a sixth title, and their fourth in succession.

It was further confirmation that while the big beasts of European football are stirring – this was Barca's first Final but will not be their last – Lyon remain peerless in the women's club game. Chelsea pushed them hard in the semi-finals, and Wolfsburg at times tested them in the quarter-finals, but the French club are still ahead of the pack. Besides another European title, they won the domestic league and cup double for the seventh time in eight years.

As an indication of how Lyon treat their female players, they were taken to Budapest by private charter and met by their own team bus, which had been driven across Europe from France. Having experienced this level of attention, Hegerberg knows how it can be. By contrast, she says, the Norwegian FA could not even supply players with correctly sized boots when Norway played at Euro 2017.

Lyon took command of the Final in the fifth minute when, to the delight of many in the near-20,000 crowd, Budapest-born German international Dzsenifer Marozsan converted Shanice Van de Sanden's cross. Marozsan's father, Janos, played four times for Hungary before pursuing his professional career in Germany when his daughter was four.

Then came Hegerberg's treble as she tucked away crosses from Van de Sanden, Amel Majri and Lucy Bronze in quick succession.

That was game over and everyone knew it. Barcelona kept pressing and scored a consolation through Nigeria's Asisat Oshoala, but the gulf they need to bridge was there for all to see.

The Catalan club, who will be playing in the new Estadio Johan Cruyff next season, have now converted Oshoala's loan from Chinese side Dalian Quanjian to a permanent deal and also signed Norway's Caroline Graham Hansen from Wolfsburg. Equally important will be retaining Lieke Martens who has been linked with a move to Lyon.

It remains to be seen whether the Dutch striker makes the switch but Lyon have already strengthened. Their first summer move was to bring in Nikita Parris, the English football writers' female Footballer of the Year who became the third ex-Manchester City player to join the club, following England team-mates Bronze and Izzy Christiansen.

> While the big beasts of European football are stirring, Lyon remain peerless in the women's club game

Parris signed off with a quiet showing in the Women's FA Cup Final as City eased to a 3-0 win against Wembley debutants West Ham United. After an even first half, during which Jane Ross should have put the Hammers ahead, a goalkeeping error enabled Keira Walsh to give City the lead. They never looked like relinquishing the advantage but it was not until the last 10 minutes that Georgia Stanway and sub Lauren Hemp made the game safe.

Hat-trick...Ada Hegerberg (in white)

Award...Joe Montemurro

A crowd of 43,264 were present, slightly down on last season's London derby between Chelsea and Arsenal. It might have established a new record had the Premier League allowed West Ham to shift their men's fixture against Southampton to an earlier kick-off to enable fans to attend both matches.

Joe Montemurro was coach of the year after he led Arsenal to their first league title since 2012, with players' union's female player of the year Vivianne Miedema scoring 22 goals in the 20-game season. After winning their first eight matches, injuries to Kim Little and then Jordan Nobbs resulted in a dip in form, but they recovered to take the title with a match to spare. Manchester City took the second European slot, leaving Chelsea without continental competition next term.

Montemurro has been active in the early summer transfer market, in part to enlarge the squad for their first European campaign in seven years. A trio of players have been recruited from Bayern Munich – Manuela Zinsberger, Jill Roord and Leonie Maier – and Scotland defender Jen Beattie returned from Manchester City.

Manchester United, in their debut campaign, were promoted to WSL along

Domestic double ...Wolfsburg

with Tottenham Hotspur. United soon gave notice they mean business, signing Dutch midfielder Jackie Groenen from Frankfurt. Abbie McManus, a girlhood United fan, made the switch from City.

Benfica romped through the second tier in Portugal on their debut but found life harder in the top flight this season, finishing third, well adrift of champions Braga. Defending champions Sporting were runners-up.

In Germany and Italy, Wolfsburg and Juventus both retained their titles, narrowly pipping Bayern Munich and Fiorentina respectively. Both added cup wins to achieve domestic doubles.

Milan, newly formed after taking over the licence and playing squad of Brescia, were third in Italy. Roma, another rebrand, were fourth. They will be joined next term by Internazionale who won Serie B.

However, Lyon remain the benchmark. Barely was the treble in the trophy cabinet than the club announced they were parting with coach Reynald Pedros because "It was necessary to change the technical organization to...allow the women's team to regenerate and continue to progress". WS

Round -up

On top...Washington Spirit midfielder Andi Sullivan (right) beats Sky Blue midfielder Sarah Killion

▲ WASHINGTON LEAD IN USA

Despite nearly 60 players featuring in the World Cup, the US-based National Women's Soccer League continued its programme. Unsurprisingly this led to an unfamiliar look to the table, with Washington Spirit leading after eight rounds and reigning champions North Carolina Courage mid-table.

Sky Blue struggled but were ahead of Orlando Pride, who had only taken one point with a third of the season gone. New coach Marc Skinner signed Scotland striker Claire Emslie from Manchester City, but she was unable to join until after the campaign in France.

Absent...Marie-Antoinette Katoto

▲ WORLD CUP ABSENTEES

Ada Hegerberg was not the only big name lost from the World Cup. Paris Saint-Germain's Marie-Antoinette Katoto, the top scorer in the French league, was omitted while Lyon and England's Izzy Christiansen failed to recover from an injury sustained in March. A trio of Brazilians, including veterans Fabiana and Erika, were ruled out after the squad announcement as were Meikayla Moore (New Zealand) and Kayla McCoy (Jamaica).

Among the veterans who missed out on selection were Fara Williams (England), Nompumelelo Nyandeni (South Africa) and Emma Mitchell (Scotland). Arsenal's Mitchell also missed Euro 2017, the only other tournament that the Scots have qualified for, through injury.

▼ GLOBAL LEAGUE APPEALS

Gianni Infantino revived the concept of a world league for women's national teams at FIFA Congress in Paris.

FIFA's president said the idea, floated two years ago, was '"put on hold but we will resuscitate it and bring it back to the table because we need to create a greater boost around women's football," adding: "We need to commercialise it separately from men's football."

His original plan featured 16 teams plus four regional divisions with promotion and relegation.

▼ FEMALE IRANIAN FANS BEATEN

Women attempting to watch Iran play Syria in a friendly international in Tehran were beaten by security forces and arrested. Female Syrian fans were reportedly allowed entry, but not Iranians. Women are not allowed to watch men playing football in Iran despite several requests by FIFA.

▼ FAMILY REUNION AT CITY

Portugal's Matilde Fidalgo, who is the cousin of Manchester City men's midfielder Bernardo Silva, joined the club from Braga. City, who have lost several players, also brought in England striker Ellen White from Birmingham.

Fidalgo...Bernardo Silva's cousin

	HOW THE LEAGUE WAS WON	CUP WINNERS	WHO QUALIFIED FOR EUROPE
Albania SUPERLIGA *by John Holmesdale*	Partizani won their first title since 1993, finishing a clear distance ahead of Kukesi, who again finished as runners-up. Last year's champions Skenderbeu, who were handed a 10-year UEFA ban for match fixing, dropped back to fifth.	Kukesi won the Cup for only the second time in their history, beating Tirana 2-1 in the Final.	Partizani go into the Champions League first qualifying round, Kukesi and Teuta enter the Europa League first qualifying round along with Laci who were sixth but qualified as Skenderbeu are under a UEFA ban and Flamurtari were denied a licence.
Austria BUNDESLIGA *by Brian Homewood*	In a new format, with the number of teams increased from 10 and 12 and the league split into two after they had all played each other twice, Red Bull Salzburg led from the front, winning their first 10 matches, clinching another title with three games to spare.	RB Salzburg completed the double by beating Rapid Vienna 2-0 in the Final with goals from Patrick Farkas and Munas Dabbur. Third-tier Grazer AK beat Austria Vienna 2-1 in the quarter-finals, but were walloped 6-0 by Salzburg in the semis.	Salzburg go into the Champions League group stage as Austria moved up in the UEFA coefficients and runners-up LASK Linz are in the third qualifying round. Wolfsburger are in the Europa League group stage, with Austria Vienna and Sturm Graz in the qualifiers.
Belgium FIRST DIVISION A *by Nick Bidwell*	The most attack-conscious team in the country, Genk claimed a fourth national title, after 1999, 2002 and 2011. The club from east Flanders were in pole position for most of the campaign. Club Brugge pushed them close, but ultimately had too many off days.	Second division Mechelen were the giant-killing heroes in the Final, coming from behind to beat top-flight Gent 2-1. Man of the match for Mechelen was right-winger Nikola Storm who fired home his side's equaliser and then set up the winner for Chilean defender German Mera.	Genk were rewarded with a short-cut to the Champions League group phase, while Club Brugge are in the qualifiers. Standard Liege, Antwerp – who beat Charleroi in an end-of-season play-off – and domestic cup winners Mechelen have Europa League qualification dates.
Bosnia PREMIER LEAGUE *by Sasa Ibrulj*	Sarajevo spent the most of the season at the top of the table, but a poor run of form in the final third of the season almost cost them the title. Luckily for them, the opposition kept shooting themselves in the foot.	Sarajevo confirmed their domination by beating Siroki Brijeg 3-2 on aggregate in the Final.	Sarajevo will play in the Champions League, while Zrinjski and Siroki enter the Europa League. Fourth-place Zeljeznicar failed to get a licence so their place went to Radnik Bijeljina.
Bulgaria FIRST LEAGUE *by Rumen Paytashev*	Ludogorets won their eighth title in a row, a figure that puts them third in the all-time list of champions, behind CSKA with 31 and Levski with 26.	For the first time the Final was between Plovdiv rivals Botev and Lokomotiv, with the latter winning with a goal from Slovenian striker Alen Ozhbolt.	Ludogorets will take their place in the Champions League qualifiers, with cup winners Lokomotiv Plovdiv and second placed CSKA Sofia in the Europa League, along with Levski, who beat Etar in a play-off.
Croatia PRVA HNL *by Sasa Ibrulj*	Dinamo Zagreb became the first team to break the 90-point barrier since the league was reduced to 10 teams and were on the top from day one. Arch-rivals Hajduk were far from at their best, finishing fourth.	Huge favourites going into the Final, Dinamo Zagreb were unable to break down a strong Rijeka defence and were beaten 3-1.	Dinamo Zagreb will start in the second qualifying round of the Champions League. Cup winners Rijeka finished second in the league and start in the Europa League third round, while third-placed Osijek will play in the second round. Hajduk Split go into the first round.

RELEGATED/ PROMOTED		PLAYER OF THE SEASON	COACH OF THE SEASON	NEWCOMER OF THE SEASON
Bottom-placed Kamza dropped out of the league and were demoted to the third tier as punishment for violence at a league game where the ref was attacked. Ninth-place Kastrioti were also relegated. Bylis and former champions Vllaznia were promoted.	Cup winners ...Kukesi	Kukesi's Mozambique international Reginaldo won the Superliga golden boot with 13 goals in 32 appearances.	Former Albania Under-21 boss Skender Gega took charge of Partizani last summer and guided them to the title, but then left at the end of the campaign for personal reasons.	Having broken into the Partizani first team in 2017, winger Jasir Asani had an outstanding first full campaign and finished as his team's top scorer.
Promoted last season, Wacker Innsbruck went straight back down to the Erste Liga, having never managed higher than eighth place all season. They were replaced by Wattens who won the second tier by two points.	Final... Rapid (in stripes) and RB Salzburg	Israeli forward Munas Dabbur led RB Salzburg's title chase with 20 goals and 11 assists in 29 league appearances, finishing as the league's top scorer for the second season in a row. He left to join Sevilla at the end of the season.	Marcos Rose's second season at RB Salzburg was pretty similar to the first as his team comfortably won the title, and they also made the last 16 of the Europa League. He joins Borussia Monchengladbach this summer.	Signed from Dinamo Tbilisi before the start of the season, Georgian midfielder Otar Kiteishvili quickly made his mark with Sturm Graz and was one of the few players to emerge with any credit from a generally disappointing season for the club.
Former elite big-shots in the 1980s, Lokeren came last in the regular season standings and were demoted. Mechelen go up after defeating Beerschot 2-1 on aggregate in the play-offs. All will change, though, if Mechelen are found guilty of match-manipulation.	Cup shock ...Mechelen	Genk's diminutive left-winger Leandro Trossard was in inspirational form all season. Skilful, imaginative and an excellent finisher, although he can be a little too ebullient and hot-headed for his own good.	Philippe Clement, the boss of champions Genk, used to be known as an advocate of highly structured, pedestrian play. But not anymore. His side were full of front-foot intent and he is set to take over at Club Brugge next season.	Still only 19, Gent and Canada striker Jonathan David showed immense promise in his inaugural campaign as a European professional. Borussia Dortmund are thought to have the teenager on their wish-list, whish is a sure indicator of his quality.
GOSK Gabela and Krupa are replaced by Borac Banja Luka and Velez Mostar, who both have big support.	Double... Sarajevo	Mersudin Ahmetovic had one of his best seasons since returning from Russia and helped Sarajevo to dominate domestically.	Husref Musemic is a Sarajevo legend, winning the title in 1985 as a player and adding two more as coach. In his fifth spell in charge of the side, they became only the second team to win the double.	Vladan Kovacevic started the season as Sarajevo's back-up keeper, but got his chance after a heavy Europa League loss to Atalanta. He was also called up to the national side.
Vereya were expelled by the Bulgarian Football Union after repeated warnings from UEFA over suspected match-fixing, with Septemvri Sofia also demoted. Tsarsko Selo and Arda are promoted.	Dominant... Ludogorets (in green)	Todor Nedelev of Botev Plovdiv was a classy playmaker and goalscorer. Having said he will only play for Botev in Bulgaria, a move abroad looks likely.	The former Levski player and current manager of Cherno More, Iliyan Iliev led his side to victories over Ludogorets, CSKA Sofia and Levski.	Levski bought playmaker Davide Mariani from Switzerland and he won over initially dubious fans.
Rudes won just three of their 36 league games and were relegated long before the season was officially over. They are replaced by second-tier champions Varaadin, who were once known as Varteks and spent 21 years in the top flight before they went to administration in 2013.	Historic... Dinamo Zagreb	Since arriving at Dinamo from Barcelona in 2014, Dani Olmo has been the best player in the league. The Spaniard's calmness and technical ability make a huge difference in such a poor competition.	After making his name abroad in Austria, Italy and Poland, Nenad Bjelica had huge expectations with Zagreb and caused a sensation in the Europa League.	Darko Nejasmic spent the first half of the season in the club's reserves before promotion to the first team saw him become one of Hajduk's most important players.

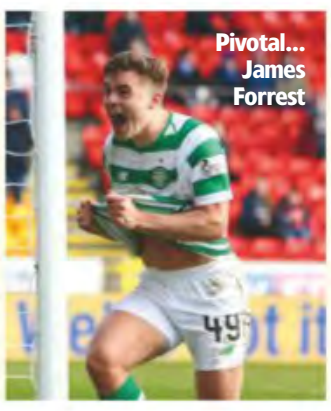
	HOW THE LEAGUE WAS WON	CUP WINNERS	WHO QUALIFIED FOR EUROPE
Cyprus FIRST DIVISION *by Nick Bidwell*	APOEL won their seventh straight title. AEK Larnaca were unimpressive in the first half of the campaign but came with a late run to secure the runners-up spot. Third-placed Apollon played some excellent attacking football but let themselves down in their top-six encounters.	AEL Limassol claimed a first cup win since 1989, upsetting favourites APOEL 2-0 in the Final. Inspired throughout by Cape Verdean keeper Vozinha, they took the lead through Dosa Junior and Marko Adamovic sealed victory in the second half.	APOEL will be in the hat for the Champions League first qualifying round and have their hearts set on a fifth-group phase appearance. Limassol outfits Apollon and AEL join AEK Larnaca in the Europa League.
Czech Republic FIRST LEAGUE *by Sam Beckwith*	Chinese-owned Slavia Prague were the dominant force in a new-look league format. Leaders for all but a fortnight of the 30-game regular season, they made winning the title a formality with a 3-1 victory over nearest rivals Viktoria Plzen in round two of a new six-game championship group.	Four days after clinching the league title with a 0-0 draw in Ostrava, Slavia beat the same side 2-0 in Olomouc to win their first league-and-cup double since the second world war. Tomas Soucek opened the scoring with a penalty and Lukas Masopust added the second.	Last season's champions Viktoria Plzen join Slavia in the Champions League. After a disappointing season, third-placed Sparta Prague must settle for the Europa League, along with fourth-placed Jablonec and play-off winners Mlada Boleslav.
Denmark SUPERLIGA *by Jim Holden*	Copenhagen's decision to keep faith with boss Stale Solbakken paid off, and after a close battle with Midtjylland in the regular season they romped away with the title in the final Championship round of 10 matches, with two derby victories against Brondby at crucial moments.	Midtjylland beat Brondby on penalties after a tense Final finished 1-1. It was a first cup triumph after four previous Final defeats and a great success for boss Kenneth Anderson, who stepped up after 13 years as youth coach midway through the season when Jess Thorup left for Gent.	Copenhagen go into the second qualifying round of the Champions League, while Midtylland are in the third qualifying round of the Europa League. Esbjerg are in the second qualifying round of the Europa League, while Brondby beat Randers 4-2 to win the final spot.
Greece SUPER LEAGUE *by Nick Bidwell*	The only unbeaten league champion in Europe this term, PAOK were a united machine who secured their first title since 1985. The key moments of the season were home and away victories over nearest challengers Olympiakos.	For the third consecutive year, PAOK overcame AEK in the Final, with a solitary goal from Chuba Akpom a minute before the break. AEK dominated territorially for long periods in the second half but lacked creativity and the PAOK defence was as watertight as ever.	PAOK and runners-up Olympiakos head for the Champions League sifting process, the former starting in the third qualifying round, the latter in the second round. AEK, Atromitos and another Salonika side, Aris, will take part in Europa League eliminators.
Holland EREDIVISIE *by Klaas-Jan Droppert*	PSV dropped crucial points after the winter break, with Ajax clinching the title on the penultimate match day. A 34th title had emotional and symbolic value as it was Abdelhak Nouri's shirt number. The champions scored 119 goals – the third-biggest haul in the competition's history.	Prior to claiming the league title, Ajax won the cup for the first time in nine years. In a one-sided Final against Willem II in Rotterdam, they were simply too good for the Tilburg side and won 4-0 with goals from Daley Blind, Klaas-Jan Huntelaar (two) and Rasmus Kristensen.	Since Holland no longer has an automatic berth anymore, Ajax and PSV will join the Champions League preliminaries. Feyenoord and AZ, who finished third and fourth in the league enter the Europa League qualifying round, along with Utrecht, who won the European play-offs.
Hungary NB I *by Peterjon Cresswell*	Ferencvaros led the table from the second game of the season to the finish to win a record 30th league crown, brushing aside a bid by 2018 champions MOL Vidi. The club's five-figure average home gates were a huge advantage.	MOL Vidi made up for the loss of their league title with a 2-1 win over Honved thanks to a stoppage-time goal from Anel Hadzic.	Ferencvaros will be unseeded participants in the first qualifying round of the Champions League. Cup winners MOL Vidi, a revived Debrecen and Honved are the three representatives in the Europa League.

RELEGATED/ PROMOTED		PLAYER OF THE SEASON	COACH OF THE SEASON	NEWCOMER OF THE SEASON
Rock bottom Larnaca club Ermis Aradippou only managed three wins all season and were rightly demoted. Alki Oroklini also went down and the pair are replaced by second division champions Ethnikos Achna and Olympiakos Nicosia.	Euro bound... Apollon Limassol's Emilio Zelaya	Having moved to APOEL from Shabab Al Ordon last May, 21-year-old Jordanian international winger Musa Al Taamari scored nine goals for the Nicosia-based club.	Brought back in January for a second stint in the AEK Larnaca hot seat, Imanol Idiakez did a fine job of galvanising the side and the Basque took no time at all in restoring their focus and organisation.	Still only 22, APOEL's Leo Natel enjoyed an outstanding first campaign as a Europe-based professional. Previously with Brazilian side Sao Paulo, he combines blistering pace with inventiveness and a fearsome shot.
Dukla Prague went down after finishing last in a six-team relegation group, while south Bohemian side Dynamo Ceske Budejovice were promoted as second-tier champions. Pribram and Karvina retained their top-flight status via the play-offs.	Passionate ...Jindrich Trpisovsky	Slavia Prague's slight-looking defensive midfielder Tomas Soucek was outstanding in an impressive squad, providing leadership on the pitch, while also contributing 13 goals and six assists in the league. Slavia will struggle to keep hold of him.	Casually dressed but deeply passionate, Jindrich Trpisovsky excelled in his first full season at Slavia Prague, delivering a double, leading the league in both goals scored and fewest conceded, and enjoying a run to the Europa League quarter-finals, beating Sevilla along the way.	Powerful forward Adam Hlozek became the youngest player in Sparta Prague's history at 16 years, three months and 16 days. Five months later, another record fell as he became the league's youngest goalscorer.
Silkeborg won automatic promotion back to the top flight after a close battle with Viborg. The other spots were settled in play-offs, with Lyngby beating Vendsyssel and Hobro overcoming Viborg.	Cup winner...Erik Sviatchenko of Midtjylland	Robert Skov scored 29 goals for Copenhagen, a record for a Superliga season, and all the more remarkable as he played ostensibly as a winger. It was his first full season at the club – and may be his last too, with Tottenham Hotspur among clubs looking at him.	John Lammers has been a miracle worker at minnows Esbjerg. The 55-year-old Dutchman arrived in the summer of 2017, winning promotion in his first season and then third place in the Superliga this term with a resilient, hard-working 4-3-3 set-up.	Teenage striker Andreas Skov Olsen's tally of 22 would have made him top scorer in any other season. The 19-year-old grabbed nearly half of sixth-placed Nordsjaelland's goals.
With the Super League being reduced from 16 to 14 sides, Apollon Smyrnis, Levadiakos and PAS Giannina were relegated, with second-tier champions Volos coming up. In an all-Crete relegation/promotion play-off, OFI saw off second division runners-up Platanias.	Goldkeeper ...Alexandros Paschalakis of PAOK	PAOK keeper Alexandros Paschalakis' statistics speak for themselves: 16 clean sheets and a miserly 14 goals conceded. Known as "The Goldkeeper", his incredible shot-stopping ability was particularly in evidence in crunch league games against Olympiakos and AEK.	In his second season with PAOK, the Romanian Razvan Lucescu offered a masterclass in man-management and tactical awareness, continually setting new goals for his players. He is the son of ex-Romania, Internazionale and Shakhtar boss Mircea Lucescu.	Twenty-year-old PAOK right-winger Leo Jaba, recruited from Russian side Akhmat Grozny in the close season, was a hit with his pace, dribbling and final ball. A Brazil under-20 international, he learnt his chops at Corinthians and Sao Paulo.
Bottom of the table NAC Breda were relegated and will be replaced by Twente, who return after a one-year absence. Excelsior and De Graafschap went down in the play-offs and swap places with Waalwijk and Sparta Rotterdam.	Champions ...Ajax	Ajax's Dusan Tadic was quite clearly the best player in the league. His 28 goals in 34 games made him joint top scorer with PSV's Luuk De Jong, while he was also equal first with 14 assists. The Serb played a vital role in his club's run to the Champions League semi-finals.	As well as the domestic double, Erik Ten Hag led Ajax in a marvellous European campaign. It is hard to believe he was heavily criticised in the first few months after his arrival last year. A great tactician who introduced some realism to Ajax's attacking style of play.	Noussair Mazraoui came up through the Ajax youth ranks as a midfielder but was converted into a full-back by Erik Ten Hag. Although national coach Ronald Koeman was interested in the Dutch-born starlet, he has opted to play for Morocco, his parents' country.
Tracksuited keeper Gabor Kiraly bade farewell to an 882-match career, as Haladas were relegated. A last-day dogfight attracted a 12,000-plus crowd to Diosgyor, whose 3-0 win over Ujpest put them above MTK. Zalaegerszeg return to the top tier, along with Kaposvar.	On top... Ferencvaros	Nearly a quarter of the 72 goals scored by champions Ferencvaros came from Italian striker Davide Lanzafame, who was key to Honved's title win in 2017.	Former Ukraine star Serhiy Rebrov replaced Thomas Doll at Ferencvaros after the club's disastrous European exit in August and proved a strong hand on the tiller.	During the winter break, Serhiy Rebrov brought in 24-year-old compatriot Igor Kharatin to bolster the Ferencvaros midfield and his goal against MOL Vidi turned a vital game.

	HOW THE LEAGUE WAS WON	CUP WINNERS	WHO QUALIFIED FOR EUROPE
Israel PREMIER LEAGUE *by Nick Bidwell*	Maccabi Tel Aviv lost once in 36 games and clinched the title in double-quick time, with the celebrations beginning a full two months before the end of the campaign. They ended up a record 31 points ahead of second-place Maccabi Haifa.	Tel Aviv outfit Bnei Yehuda lifted their second cup in three years by defeating Maccabi Netanya 5-4 on penalties in the Final. At the end of extra time, the two sides were level at 1-1. Yehuda midfielder Yuval Ashkenazi scored the decisive spot-kick.	Maccabi Tel Aviv will be hoping to appear in the Champions League group stage for the first time since 2015-16. Maccabi Haifa, third-placed Hapoel Be'er Sheva and cup winners Bnei Yehuda must try to find a way out of the Europa League qualification maze.
Luxembourg NATIONAL DIVISION *by Nick Bidwell*	For the fourth consecutive season, Dudelange reigned supreme, clinching the title in improbable fashion on the penultimate weekend of the campaign. Three-nil down after 70 minutes at Hostert, they snatched a late win. Esch clubs, Fola and Jeunesse, were second and third respectively.	Dudelange secured the double with a 5-0 victory over an inexperienced Etzella Ettelbruck side. Not that the latter did not put up a fight, holding their opponents goalless for almost an hour. Etzella's fate was sealed when defender Losseni Keita was sent-off after 65 minutes.	Dudelange's reward for winning the league is an invitation to the first round of Champions League qualification. Fola Esch, Jeunesse Esch and fourth-placed Progres Niederkorn have a shot at making the Europa League.
Malta PREMIER LEAGUE *by Domenic Aquilina*	Valletta and Hibernians finished the season on 58 points, so the league was settled for the first time with a play-off, which Valletta won on penalties after a 2-2 draw. Valletta's 25th league title means they are now joint second in the all-time list, one behind Sliema Wanderers.	Two weeks after being crowned champions, Valletta were denied a second successive double, beaten on penalties after a 4-4 draw in the FA Trophy Final by Balzan. Alfred Effiong scored all four of Balzan's goals and also put away the decisive spot-kick in the shoot-out.	Valletta will start their 12th consecutive European campaign in the first qualifying round of the Champions League. League runners-up Hibernians and third-place Gzira United join cup winners Balzan in the first qualifying round of the Europa League.
Montenegro FIRST LEAGUE *by Dejan Panic*	Sutjeska dominated the campaign and successfully defended their title, playing an efficient and attractive brand of football.	Buducnost beat Lovcen 4-0 in the Final to claim their first silverware for two years and a first trophy in the coaching career of ex-Montenegro national coach Branko Brnovic.	Sutjeska go into the qualifiers for the Champions League, while Buducnost, Zeta and Titograd take part in the Europa League qualifiers.
Northern Ireland PREMIERSHIP *by Roy Kitson*	After finishing fourth in 2018, Linfield bounced back to dominate, winning the title with three games to spare by a margin of seven points from runners-up Ballymena United. Andrew Waterworth, with 17 goals, was key for the Blues, along with Jordan Stewart and Jamie Mulgrew.	There was consolation for Crusaders' poor league performance with a 3-0 victory over Championship side Ballinamallard United to win the cup for the first time in 10 years. Midfielders Jordan Forsythe and Philip Lowry were on target, along with substitute Ross Clarke.	Linfield start in the first qualifying round of the Champions League, while the Europa League plays host to Crusaders, Ballymena United and play-off winners Cliftonville.
North Macedonia FIRST FOOTBALL LEAGUE *by Milorad Stojmanovski*	Shkendija won the title by 15 points from Vardar, and club owner Lazim Destani is now seeking to build a new stadium in Tetovo as, up to now, the team have had to play their European games in the National arena in Skopje.	Akademija Pandev, the club founded by former national skipper Goran Pandev, won their first trophy, beating Makedonija in the Final on penalties after a 2-2 draw.	Shkendija will compete in the Champions League qualifiers. Akademija Pandev, Shkupi and Makedonija go into the Europa League.

RELEGATED/ PROMOTED		PLAYER OF THE SEASON	COACH OF THE SEASON	NEWCOMER OF THE SEASON
Bnei Sakhnin and Maccabi Petah Tikva dropped out of the Premier League. Sektzia Nes Tziona were promoted as second-tier champions and return to the top flight after 51 years of absence, along with Hapoel Kfar Saba.	Sharp... Ben Sahar	Hapoel Be'er Sheva striker Ben Sahar was sharp all season and topped the national scoring charts with 15 goals. The much-travelled front runner – who has played in England, Germany, Spain, France and Holland – is still only 29 years old.	A gifted attacking midfielder in his playing days for Partizan Belgrade, AEK Athens, PAOK and Serbia, Maccabi Tel Aviv boss Vladimir Ivic is made of the right leadership stuff too, excelling in man-management and doing a great job in keeping complacency at bay.	Twenty-one-year-old Ivorian midfield anchor man Ismaila Soro had a marvellous first full season in the Bnei Yehuda first team. Previously with Belarusian side Gomel, he has plenty of athleticism, energy and tackling ability.
RM Hamm Benfica and Rumelange came up short in the top-flight survival stakes. They will be replaced by the best of the second-tier crop: champions Rodange and top-flight debutants Muhlenbach Blue Boys.	Recuperating ...Jeff Strasser	Dudelange's attacking right-back Edisson Jordanov was a constant source of inspiration for the champions. An explosive mix of pace and final-ball delivery, the former Bulgarian under-21 was born and brought up in eastern Germany.	After suffering a heart scare 18 months ago while coaching then German second division side Kaiserslautern, Jeff Strasser has been recuperating very nicely at Fola Esch, where he was once a player and where he started his technical-area career.	Seventeen-year-old Petange left-back Tun Held showed a great deal of promise in the second half of the season. Calm, mature and resourceful when going forward, he used to be an attacking midfielder – and it shows.
Qormi and Pieta Hotspurs were relegated and will be replaced by First Division champions Sirens and Gudja United. Santa Lucia beat St Andrews 4-1 and will also be in the top flight next season as the first team from the second tier ever to win the promotion/ relegation play-off.	Safe...Henry Bonello	The son of John Bonello, who conceded 12 goals against Spain in 1983, 30-year-old Henry Bonello had a fine season in goal for Valletta and also saved a penalty against the Faroe Islands in March as the national team won its first competitive home match in 13 years.	With Balzan having a rather disappointing campaign, the decision to bring in Jacques Scerri as their new coach in February, following the resignation of Marko Micovic, turned out to be a coup for club president Anton Tagliaferro as he led the side to its first-ever major silverware.	Brazilian striker Taylon joined Hibernians from Internacional at the start of the season and ended the campaign as the league's top scorer with 18 goals. He also opened the scoring in his side's play-off decider against Valletta – even though he claims he was offered a bribe not to play.
Mornar were relegated and replaced by Mladost Ljeskopolje. In the play-offs, Rudar retained their top-flight status but Lovcen swap places with Kom.	Move...Nikola Krstovic	Zeta's teen striker Nikola Krstovic helped his side to win a place in Europe. With 17 goals, of which none were penalties, he was the league's top scorer and earned a transfer to Red Star Belgrade.	Nikola Rakojevic guided Sutjeska to the league title for the second time in a row, despite health problems in the final stages of the season. Eventually he had to undergo urgent surgery for prostate cancer, but returned to football only a few days after being released from hospital.	Under-21 international Vladan Kordic scored 12 goals for Grbalj and his bicycle kick against Mornar is favourite to win the country's goal of the season award.
Larne, backed by the millionaire founder of Purple Bricks, Kenny Bruce, were runaway Championship winners and replace Newry City. Ards also go down after losing in the play-offs to Championship runners-up Carrick Rangers.	Bounce back... David Healy	Jimmy Callacher has been a fixture in Linfield's side since January 2014 and he dominated in defence as the team kept 21 clean sheets in the league. He also chipped in with nine goals during the campaign.	Northern Ireland's record international goalscorer, David Healy led Linfield to his second Premiership title, bouncing back from a poor campaign last term.	Ballymena United's 18-year-old central defender Kofi Balmer played with a maturity beyond his years and was an automatic starting choice for the Premiership runners-up.
Belasica and Pobeda were relegated, with Borec and Struga promoted.	Consistent... Visar Musliu	Central defender Visar Musliu was consistently impressive for Shkendija, who had the second-best record in the league with 29 goals conceded.	Jugoslav Trencovski led Akademija Pandev to the cup and third place in the league. Although the team had no stars, he instilled a great spirit.	Renova striker Vlatko Stojanovski was the league's top scorer with 18 goals, including four in a 9-1 thrashing of Pobeda.

	HOW THE LEAGUE WAS WON	CUP WINNERS	WHO QUALIFIED FOR EUROPE
Poland EKSTRAKLASA *by Dariusz Kurowski*	After avoiding relegation on the final day of last season, Piast Gliwice stunned everyone by becoming Polish champions for the first time. They won 1-0 away to title favourites Legia Warsaw in early May and overtook them at the top of the table with three games to play.	Thirty-six years after their first success, Lechia Gdansk lifted the Polish Cup once more. Piotr Stokowiec's side beat Jagiellonia Bialystok 1-0 in the Final with a late goal from Artur Sobiech. Holders Legia Warsaw went out to second-tier Rakow Czestochowa.	In the Champions League for the first time, Piast Gliwice will start in the first qualifying round. League runners-up Legia Warsaw and fourth-place Cracovia go into the first qualifying round of the Europa League, while cup winners Lechia Gdansk enter a round later.
Portugal PRIMEIRA LIGA *by Tom Kundert*	Upon losing 2-0 to Portimonense in January, Benfica dropped to fourth, seven points adrift of leaders Porto. Rui Vitoria was sacked, B-team coach Bruno Lage was promoted and the team won 18 and drew one of their remaining 19 matches to finish top of the pile.	Having already beaten Porto on penalties to win the League Cup in January, Sporting did the cup double by beating the same opponents in May, with skipper Bruno Fernandes scoring in all seven games they played in the competition.	Benfica go into the Champions League group stage, while Porto will have to negotiate two qualifiers to join them. Sporting, Braga and Vitoria Guimaraes will be in the Europa League, the latter two having to go through the qualifying rounds to reach the group stage.
Romania LIGA I *by Emanuel Rosu*	CFR Cluj were champions for the second year in a row after a torrid season at the club. They had four coaches and suffered player strikes but still finished ahead of FCSB, who were runners-up for the fourth year in a row. Viitorul came third.	Owned and coached by Gheorghe Hagi, Viitorul beat Astra Giurgiu 2-1 after extra time in a tense Final. More than 70 per cent of Hagi's side are academy products and the captain is his 20-year-old son, Ianis.	CFR will be in the first qualifying round of the Champions League, while FCSB and fourth-placed Craiova go into the first round of the Europa League qualifying phase. Having won the Cup, Viitorul will play in the second qualifying round.
Russia PREMIER LEAGUE *by Victor Gusev*	Zenit won the title by eight points from last term's champions Lokomotiv Moscow, clinching the league three rounds from the end of the tournament. It was their fifth win in modern Russian history, having also finished top of the Soviet League in 1984.	Lokomotiv added the cup to their league runners-up spot, beating Ural Yekaterinburg 1-0 in the Final for a record eighth success since 1996 and for the sixth time under Yuri Semin.	While Zenit and Lokomotiv are no strangers to the Champions League, third-place Krasnodar are in the qualification stage for the first time in their 11-year history. The Europa League berths are taken by Moscow clubs CSKA and Spartak, along with Arsenal Tula.
Scotland PREMIERSHIP *by Phil Gordon*	Celtic overcame the loss of boss Brendan Rodgers to Leicester City in February to seal an eighth successive title, finishing nine points ahead of Rangers. Defeat at Ibrox in December saw the Glasgow rivals level at the winter break but a 2-1 win over Rangers in March ended their challenge.	Winners a record 39 times, Celtic beat Hearts 2-1 in the Final, with two goals from Odsonne Edouard, to lift the trophy for a third successive season for the first time. Victory also meant Celtic delivered Scottish football's first "treble treble".	Celtic enter the Champions League first qualifying stage, while runners-up Rangers will be in the Europa League and join third-placed Kilmarnock in the first qualifying round along with fourth-placed Aberdeen, who benefitted from Celtic winning the cup.
Serbia SUPERLIGA *by Vladimir Novak*	Red Star won the title, finishing 12 points clear of Radnicki Nis and 18 points ahead of third-place Partizan. The margin was even greater before the split – Partizan trailing by 30 points – after which the clubs start with halved points.	Partizan denied Red Star the domestic double, winning 1-0 in the Final to claim the cup for a fourth successive season. The winning goal was scored by centre-back Bojan Ostojic, who only got back in the team when the club's third coach of the season, Savo Milosevic, took charge.	Red Star will take part in the Champions League qualifiers, while Partizan, Radnicki Nis and fourth-place Cukaricki will participate in qualification for the Europa League.

RELEGATED/ PROMOTED		PLAYER OF THE SEASON	COACH OF THE SEASON	NEWCOMER OF THE SEASON
Miedz Legnica and Zaglebie Sosnowiec both made a quick return to the second tier after promotion last season. I Liga champions Rakow Czestochowa return to the top flight after an absence of 21 years and are joined by LKS Lodz, who were Ekstraklasa champions in 1998.	Cup Final... Lechia Gdansk (in green)	Having arrived from Slovenian side Koper in 2017, Joel Valencia was moved from the wing into a more central, attacking midfield role in his second season with Piast Gliwice and the 24-year-old Ecuadorian was a key component in a title-winning campaign.	A league winner as a player with Ruch Chorzow in 1989, Waldemar Fornalik oversaw Piast Gliwice's remarkable transition from relegation battlers to champions. His success reaffirmed his coaching abilities after a less than successful spell in charge of the national team.	An intelligent defensive midfielder with a fierce will to win, 21-year-old Patryk Dziczek emerged as one of the country's most talented youngsters. A key player for champions Piast Gliwice, he also broke into the national side that qualified for the Euro Under-21 finals.
Feirense, Nacional and Chaves go down, replaced by Pacos de Ferreira, Famalicao and Gil Vicente – three northern clubs all within a 30km radius of each other. Gil Vicente were promoted directly from the third tier after winning an appeal against their 2006 demotion.	Impact... Bruno Lage	Bruno Fernandes broke the record for the highest-scoring midfielder in Europe this century, bagging 33 goals in 53 games. Sporting's captain was the best player in Portugal for the second straight season, his football intelligence, execution and incisiveness unmatched.	It is impossible to overstate the impact Bruno Lage had on Benfica, making them a front-foot side no matter the opposition. They scored more goals in the league (103) than any team for 55 years while seamlessly integrating a handful of youngsters from the club's Seixal academy.	Still a teenager, Benfica's Joao Felix enjoyed a fine season, scoring 20 goals in 43 games. Silky technique, instinctive positional sense and clinical finishing combine to make him the most exciting Portuguese striker to emerge for decades. He now has a €120m release clause.
From a village of less than 5,000 inhabitants on the outskirts of Bucharest, Academica Clinceni will play in the top-flight for the first time and are joined by Chindia Targoviste. Concordia Chiajna and Dunarea Calarasi went down.	Success... Gheorghe Hagi	CFR's George Tucudean underwent surgery for heart problems but kept his focus and finished as the season's top scorer with 18 goals, winning his third consecutive league title and establishing himself as the national team's first-choice striker.	Gheorghe Hagi started Viitorul from scratch 10 years ago and, with big questions hanging around after unsuccessful spells as a coach in Romania and Turkey, he has proved his critics wrong and created the most convincing football project in the country.	Signed by Craiova last summer on loan from Pro Vercelli, who had just been relegated to the Italian third tier, Mirko Pigliacelli didn't need a lot of time to impress and the club activated an option to buy.
Yenisey Krasnoyarsk return to the second tier after a lacklustre season, along with once mighty Anzhi. They are replaced by National League winners Tambov and runners-up Sochi. Ufa and Krylia Sovetov Samara retained their places in the play-offs.	Clear...Zenit	Artyom Dzuba, who played an important role in the national side's World Cup success, was key for Zenit, with several winning goals and his brilliant assisting game.	Krasnodar's Murad Musaev did a great job in repeating the club's third-place finish of 2015, claiming a place in the Champions League with a team containing home-grown talents.	CSKA's 21-year-old Fedor Chalov became the youngest player to top the scoring charts, netting 15 goals in 30 games.
Ross County were the first team since Hearts in 2015 to bounce back to the top flight at the first time of asking and will replace Dundee. St Mirren beat Dundee United on penalties to retain their top-flight status.	 Pivotal... James Forrest	A product of Celtic's youth system, James Forrest was a huge contributor of goals for club and country. No longer just a winger, he came up with vital winners among his 17 goals, notably against Rangers in a pivotal derby victory.	Steve Clarke turned Kilmarnock from a side that were bottom when he took over in October 2017 to a team that beat Celtic and Rangers last term, delivering European football to Killie after a two-decade absence before being made Scotland manager.	At just 19, Motherwell midfielder David Turnbull displayed vision and sublime passing, not to mention 16 spectacular goals and eight assists. However, he will need to stay at Fir Park a bit longer to develop fully.
Backa Backa Palanka, Zemun and Dinamo Vranje were relegated, while Backa Topola (for the first time), Javor Ivanjica and Indjija won promotion.	Winning goal... Bojan Ostojic	Ex-Germany international Marko Marin confirmed his class after he fulfilled his wish to play for Red Star, the club he first supported as a boy.	Vladan Milojevic guided Red Star to another league title, his second since he arrived at the Belgrade Marakana in summer 2017. He also managed to guide them to the group stage of the Champions League.	After helping Dinamo Vranje to promotion last year and signing for Greek side Olympiakos, left-winger Lazar Randelovic returned to Radnicki Nis and ended up with a league runners-up medal and a place in Serbia's under-21 side.

	HOW THE LEAGUE WAS WON	CUP WINNERS	WHO QUALIFIED FOR EUROPE
Slovakia FIRST FOOTBALL LEAGUE *by Peterjon Cresswell*	Slovan Bratislava won their first league title in five years, which was awarded soon after as the club's equally long-awaited new stadium was unveiled. They won the league with six rounds left to play – the earliest title win in the history of Slovak football.	Spartak Trnava made up for a miserable season by beating Zilina to win the Final in Nitra. Teenage striker Robert Bozenik had pegged back Spartak's lead in normal time, but then saw his spot-kick saved when a 3-3 draw took the game to penalties.	Slovan Bratislava are in the seeded half of the first qualifying round draw for the Champions League. Spartak Trnava, DAC and Ruzomberok all enter the Europa League at the first qualifying round stage.
Slovenia PRVA LIGA *by Peterjon Cresswell*	Maribor marched to a record 15th league title despite a late 3-0 hiccup at home to nearest rivals Olimpija. It proved to be one of only four defeats all season.	Olimpija gained a consolation cup win over Maribor in Celje. Austrian midfielder Stefan Savic scored twice before Maribor veteran Marco Tavares pulled one back deep into stoppage time.	Maribor enter the Champions League at the first qualifying round stage. In the Europa League, cup winners Olimpija and third-placed Domzale will be joined by debutants Mura of Murska Sobota, who gained two straight promotions to reach the top tier in 2018.
Switzerland SUPER LEAGUE *by Brian Homewood*	Young Boys retained the title with eight matches to spare – the most of any Super League winner since the 10-team began in 2003. It was a second league title in a row – and 13th overall – for a side who won their first 10 games, including a 7-1 thrashing of Basle.	Basle won the cup for the 13th time, beating Thun 2-1 in the Final. Albian Ajeti gave Basle a 23rd-minute lead and Fabian Frei appeared to make the game safe with a second after 77 minutes before Dejan Sorgic pulled one back for Thun, who last reached the Final in 1955.	Young Boys go into the Champions League play-off round and runners-up Basle the second qualifying round. Lugano's third place earned them a spot in the group stage of the Europa League, with Thun in the third qualifying round and Lucerne the second qualifying round.
Turkey SUPER LIG *by Nick Bidwell*	In January, Galatasaray were eight points behind leaders Instanbul BB. Four months later, the tables had turned, with Gala wrapping up their second consecutive national crown, sealing the deal with a home win over IBB on the penultimate weekend of the season.	Trailing to an Elvis Manu goal, Galatasaray came from behind to draw level through a Sinan Gumus penalty and then beat Akhisar 3-1 with goals in the closing minutes from Sofiane Feghouli and Mbaye Diagne to win the cup for a record-extending 18th time.	Galatasaray will feature in the Champions League group phase draw. Istanbul BB will join them if they are successful in the eliminators. Besiktas go straight to the Europa League group stage, while Trabzonspor and Malatyaspor must qualify.
Ukraine PREMIER LEAGUE *by Oleg Zadernovsky*	Shakhtar Donetsk easily won the title for the third time in a row. The signing of former Dynamo Kiev striker Junior Moraes was key and he was the league's top scorer with 19 goals. Brazilian skipper Taison was equally important with 12 assists.	Shakhtar won the cup for a 13th time and made it four in a row. In the Final they won 4-0 against Inhulets, a second-tier side from a village with just 7,000 inhabitants. Brazilian newcomer Tete, who was recruited in the winter for €16m, scored twice.	Shakhtar will go directly to the Champions League group stage, while Dynamo Kiev are in the third qualifying round. Olexandriya are in the Europa League group, while Zorya Luhansk and Mariupol must qualify.
Wales PREMIER LEAGUE *by Mel Thomas*	Despite sitting in an unfamiliar second spot in the table at the end of the first phase, behind Barry Town United, The New Saints won an eighth consecutive title. They secured the championship with two games to spare, winning all but one of their 10 second phase matches.	The Welsh Cup also went to The New Saints who won 3-0 in the Final against Connah's Quay Nomads with a brace from Ryan Brobbel and one from Greg Draper. Nomads also reached the Final of the Scottish Challenge Cup before losing 3-1 to Ross County.	TNS start in the Champions League qualifiers, while runners-up Connah's Quay Nomads and third-place Barry Town United go into the Europa League, along with the students of Cardiff Metropolitan University, who beat Bala Town on penalties in the play-offs.

RELEGATED/ PROMOTED		PLAYER OF THE SEASON	COACH OF THE SEASON	NEWCOMER OF THE SEASON
A tight finish saw Zeleziarne Podbrezova relegated, with second-tier champions Pohronie promoted just seven years after being formed. Despite a 2-0 loss at play-off challengers Poprad, 2016 champions Trencin got two late goals to win the second leg 4-1 and stay in the top tier.	Prolific... Andraz Sporar	Slovenian international striker Andraz Sporar scored almost a goal a game for champions Slovan and his final tally of 29 was three times more than his nearest competitor.	A title-winner with Trencin in 2016, Martin Sevela kept a multi-national squad balanced and focused as Slovan cantered to the championship.	Making his first-team debut last July, Zilina's 19-year-old striker Robert Bozenik scored 13 league goals and looks bound for big things.
Krsko weren't at the races and ended 13 points from safety. Five defeats and two draws in their last seven games condemned Gorica, top-flight ever-presents since independence, to play off with Tabor Sezana. A 2-1 aggregate win saw the border town reach the top tier for the first time.	Credit...Ante Simundza	Son of Zlatko, Luka Zahovic was runaway top scorer for Maribor, picking up a fifth championship winner's medal at 23.	Though Darko Milanic won the league for Maribor, his predecessor Ante Simundza deserves huge credit for taking Mura from the second tier to a European berth in a year.	Mura's 20-year-old midfielder Tomi Horvat saw a lot of first-team action for Slovenia's surprise package and also made the national under-21 squad.
Grasshoppers, league winners for a record 27 titles, finished bottom and were relegated, ending a 68-year spell in the top flight. They are replaced by Servette, who are the second-most successful club with 17 titles and return after five years in the second tier.	Winner... Guillaume Hoarau of Young Boys	After unhappy spells at Newcastle United and Rangers, Kevin Mbabu has flourished since joining Young Boys in 2016 and this season was his best yet. The right-back edged his way into the national side and now joins Borussia Monchengladbach.	Gerardo Seoane led Young Boys to an emphatic title in his first full season as a senior coach. He was hired to replace Adi Hutter last year, despite having only six months' experience under his belt with Lucerne – a surprise choice but one that paid off handsomely.	In a generally mediocre season for Sion, 19-year-old Bastien Toma was a rare bright spot and scored the stoppage-time winner against Neuchatel Xamax that meant avoiding a relegation play-off.
Super Lig champions in 2010, Bursaspor went down with Ahkisarspor and Erzurumspor. They will be replaced by second-tier top dogs Denizlispor, closest challengers Genclerbirligi and Gazisehir Gaziantep, whose triumph in the play-offs was built on two penalty shoot-out wins.	Success... Galatasaray	Senegalese striker Mbaye Diagne scored 20 goals for Kasimpasa in the first half of the campaign and then another 10 for Galatasaray after joining the club in January. Once on Juventus' books, he is rumoured to have a number of Premier League suitors.	Once again, Galatasaray's inimitable leader Fatih Terim proved to be the master of mind games, providing the perfect psychological conditions for his side's springtime comeback. No one is better at creating a siege mentality.	Able to play anywhere along the front-line, 20-year-old Besiktas starlet Guven Yalcin is both an assured finisher and chance-maker. Born and raised in Germany, he came through the Bayer Leverkusen youth ranks.
Arsenal Kiev went down, with Dnipro-1 gaining direct promotion. In the play-offs, Chornomorets swap places with Kolos Kovalivka, while Karpaty Lviv beat Volyn Lutsk and stay up.	Talent...Viktor Tsyhankov	Attacking midfielder Viktor Tsyhankov confirmed he is one of the most talented Ukrainian players of his generation. The Dynamo Kiev player scored 18 goals and provided 11 assists.	Former Dynamo Kiev forward Volodymyr Sharan guided Olexandriya to third place and the opportunity to participate in the Europa League group stage for the first time.	Teenage defender Vitaliy Mykolenko played his first season in the Premier League for Dynamo Kiev after Josip Pivaric damaged knee cruciate ligaments in January. Made his Ukraine international debut in a friendly against Turkey.
Newcomers Llanelli Town went straight back down again, with Llandudno. Replacing them are Airbus UK Broughton from the northern feeder league and Pen-y-Bont from the south. The second tiers will come under direct FAW jurisdiction next season.	Cup goals... Michael Bakare	Quick and stylish, Michael Bakare's goals for Connah's Quay Nomads saw his side challenge for the title and also reach both the Welsh Cup Final and that of the Scottish Challenge Cup, in which teams from Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland and England's National League were invited.	Double-winner Scott Ruscoe of The New Saints has continued to develop the fast-flowing passing game that has been the team's trademark style. He has been in charge since 2017 and won the league and League Cup in 2018, his first honours as a coach.	Caernarfon Town keeper Alex Ramsey played a big part in his side finishing in fourth place in their first season back in the top level. The 25-year-old was rewarded with a call-up to Wales' semi-professional squad in March.

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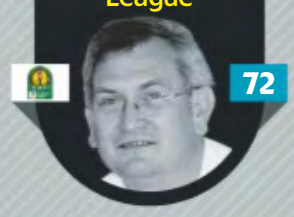

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MAY 10-JUNE 13, 2019

Global diary

A comprehensive record of recent events around the world

Triumphant...Lazio lift the Italian Cup

Friday May 10

ENGLAND: Mike Phelan agrees to become Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's full-time assistant manager at Manchester United, having been in the role on a temporary basis since December. Despite relegation from the Premier League, Fulham give caretaker manager Scott Parker a permanent two-year deal.
FIFA: Suspended in his native Italy for undisclosed reasons stemming from transfer improprieties, agent Mino Raiola has his three-month ban extended to a global sanction.
ITALY: Interim coach Claudio Ranieri confirms he will leave Roma at the end of the season.
SYRIA: Al Wahda and Teshrin's 1-1 draw means Al Jaish are Syrian Premier League champions for a fifth consecutive season.

Saturday May 11

GERMANY: Stuttgart beat Wolfsburg 3-0, a result which relegates Hanover and Nuremberg.
SOUTH AFRICA: Holders Mamelodi Sundowns beat Free State Stars 1-0 on the last day of the season to secure a record-extending ninth league title.

Sunday May 12

ENGLAND: Manchester City come from behind to win 4-1 at Brighton & Hove Albion and retain the Premier League title.
LUXEMBOURG: Dudelange score four goals in the last 20 minutes to overcome a 3-0 deficit at Hostert and secure the league title.
OFC CHAMP LEAGUE: Hienghene Sport are the first New Caledonian side to win the continental crown, beating AS Magenta 1-0.
SENEGAL: Generation Foot claim their second league title in three years with a 3-0 victory over Mbour Petit-Cote.
SWITZERLAND: Grasshoppers' game at Lucerne is abandoned in the second half, with the visitors losing 4-0, when their fans threaten to invade the pitch.

Monday May 13

ENGLAND: Brighton sack manager Chris Hughton after winning just three of their last 23 league games and finishing 17th in the table.
ITALY: Palermo, who were third in Serie B and due to take part in the promotion play-offs, are relegated to Serie C for financial irregularities.

Tuesday May 14

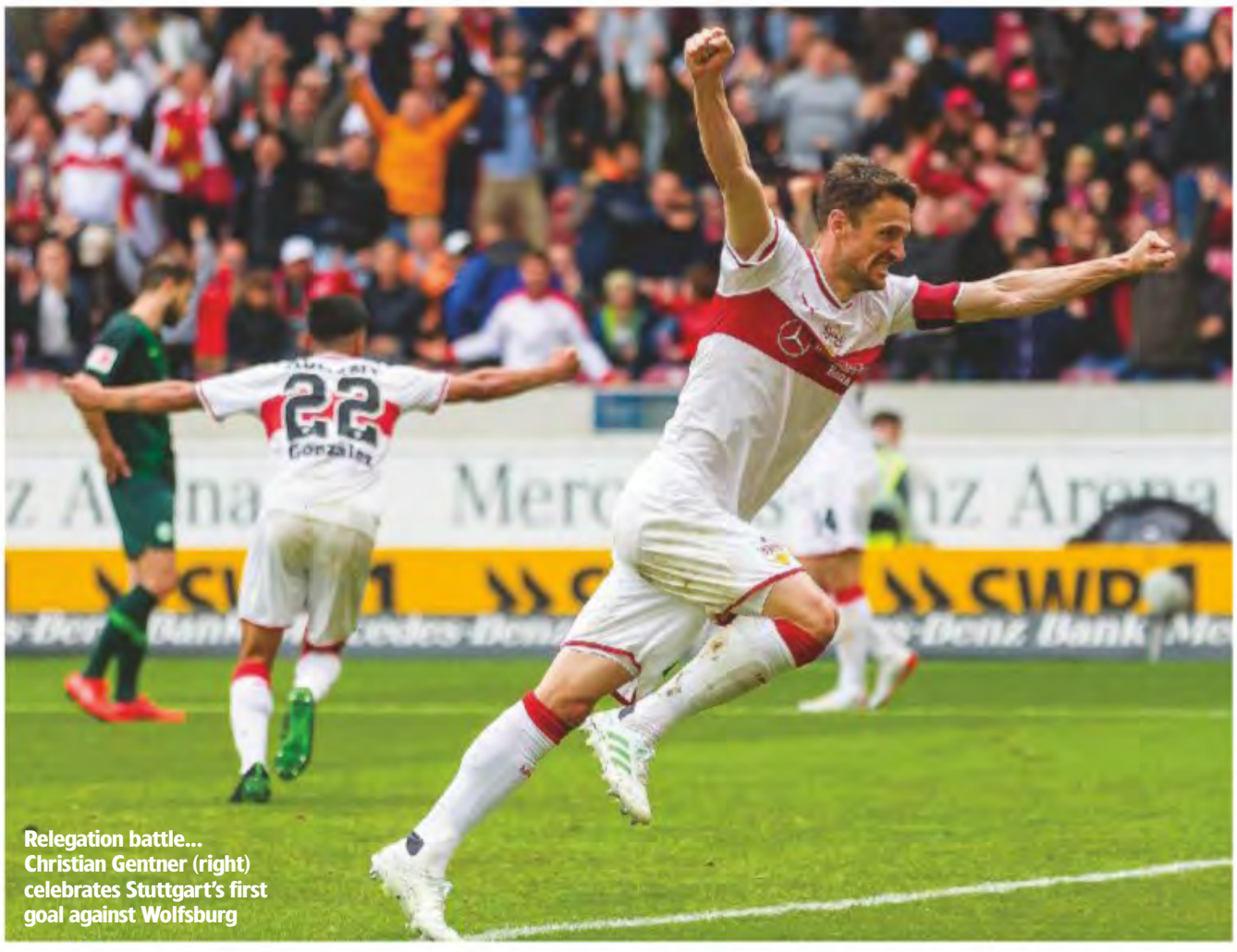
RUSSIA: Jailed for 18 months for assaulting a government official, Zenit's Aleksandr Kokorin learns he will still receive a league winners' medal despite playing just three times during the campaign.

Wednesday May 15

ANDORRA: Victor Santos, who has been president of the Andorran Football Federation for six years, resigns following an investigation into alleged embezzlement of FIFA and UEFA funds that were intended for stadium construction.
ASIAN CUP: South Korea withdraws from the running to host the 2023 Asian Cup, leaving the path clear for China as the only other bidders.
CHINA: Bottom of the table with just one win in nine games, Chris Coleman becomes the first coaching casualty of the Chinese Super League season as he is sacked by Hebei China Fortune.
HOLLAND: Ajax win 4-1 at De Graafschap on the last day of the season to claim their 34th title.
INDIA: Ex-Croatia coach Igor Stimac takes charge of India's national team.
IRAN: Marc Wilmots agrees a deal to coach Iran until the end of the 2022 World Cup.
ITALY: Lazio win the cup for the first time since 2013, beating Atalanta 2-0.
TURKEY: Galatasaray beat Akhisar 3-1 in the Turkish Cup Final.

Thursday May 16

ENGLAND: Manchester City are referred to UEFA's Club Financial Control Body adjudicatory chamber following an investigation into potential breaches of Financial Fair Play regulations.
IRAN: Persepolis make it three league titles in a row with a 1-0 victory over Pars Jonoubi Jam.
CONCACAF UNDER-17s: A 2-1 extra-time victory over the USA in the Final gives Mexico their eighth success in the tournament. The two


Relegation battle... Christian Gentner (right) celebrates Stuttgart's first goal against Wolfsburg

18+

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finalists, and beaten semi-finalists Haiti and Canada, will represent the region at the U-17 World Cup.
SAUDI ARABIA: Al Nassr beat Al Batin 2-1 to win a third consecutive Saudi Pro League championship.

Friday May 17

ITALY: Serie A champions Juventus announce that coach Massimiliano Allegri will leave the club at the end of the season.

Saturday May 18

ENGLAND: Manchester City equal the record score for an FA Cup Final, beating Watford 6-0 and becoming the first team to win the English domestic treble.
GERMANY: Bayern Munich win a seventh successive Bundesliga title by beating Eintracht Frankfurt 5-1 on the last day of the season.
PORTUGAL: Benfica beat Santa Clara 4-1 to secure their 37th league title.
U-17 WORLD CUP: Runners-up ➤

Champion...Benfica's Andre Almeida

Costa Rica

BRYAN KAY

Shock... San Carlos

Photos: EPA-EFE/REX/Shutterstock

Upstarts take title

Provincial side San Carlos create huge shock

Even in a domestic league that is as far off the radar as that of Costa Rica, there is an established order, an accepted duopoly rarely breached. In the Liga FPD, Saprissa and Alajuelense – and sometimes the ever wily Herediano – ordinarily trade the championship like a jealously shared possession.

But not this season. The hierarchy was breached by the unlikeliest of upstarts in tiny San Carlos from the agricultural town of Cuidad Quesada, northwest of the population centres around the capital, San Jose, that harbour the country's footballing powers.

Having started the 2018-19 campaign as top-flight newcomers after winning promotion from Costa Rica's Segunda Division the previous season, San Carlos' ascent to the title was extraordinary.

> Having started the campaign as top-flight newcomers, San Carlos' ascent to the title was extraordinary

There were, however, signs from the outset, and during their ultimate run to the 2019 Clausura crown they were consistently among the leading clubs in Costa Rica's two-stage league championship.

After topping the regular season league table, the team nicknamed *Los Toros del Norte* ("the northern bulls") went into their semi-final in confident mood against a Herediano side who had edged into the post-season play-offs in fourth on goal difference.

Yet San Carlos initially wilted in the first leg. Playing away in Heredia they lost 2-0, placing their Cinderella run in jeopardy – until fate and destiny aligned, and in the return leg back home the minnows dismantled their more fancied opponents with a 4-1 win.

Low on superstar players but high on grit and determination, San Carlos moved on to the Final and their date with history, where Costa Rican football royalty in the form of Saprissa awaited.

Again the first leg would be away but San Carlos travelled to the capital with hope and a 1-1 draw set up a humdinger back in Quesada.

With away goals counting, the underdogs triumphed after a 0-0 game of turgid but effective combat with a defensive masterclass, inspired by coach Luis Antonio Marin's time with the Costa Rican national team under previous bosses Jorge Luis Pinto and Oscar Ramirez.

Success has been rapid not only for the club but also Marin, who only took over the reins earlier in the year, capping a fast rise for the first-time head coach.

Fortunately, he had a handy spearhead in the form of ex-international striker Alvaro Saborio, now aged 37 but a goalscoring sensation earlier in his career with Saprissa at home and with Real Salt Lake in MLS. A local boy, Saborio had come out of retirement to play for his hometown club, first helping them out of the second tier and then to the national title.

In winning their first ever championship, San Carlos became one of a precious few of the smaller provincial clubs to manage the feat, particularly in recent years, and they now take part in the CONCACAF League, entering the continental competition in August's round of 16.

Should they negotiate their way through qualifying, the region's Champions League and the big guns of Mexico and the United States will await – which is an extraordinary prospect less than two years after a second-tier promotion campaign. WS

Australia

SIMON HILL

Sydney take the Glory in Grand Final

But VAR spoils big occasion yet again

Solid...Sydney keep out Perth's Joel Chianese

For the second consecutive A-League Grand Final, the post-match headlines were made by VAR, not the players.

Last year, malfunctioning equipment meant VAR was unable to rule out Kosta Barbarouses' winner for Melbourne Victory against Newcastle Jets, even though James Donachie had been clearly offside when he provided the cutback for Barbarouses.

In 2019, the equipment worked perfectly, but even technology still needs human beings to interpret the pictures – and Kris Griffiths-Jones didn't see a "clear and obvious" enough error to overrule the linesman's flag that denied Sydney a goal against Perth Glory. The problem was, while Griffiths-Jones was only operating to the limits of his brief, almost everyone else believed that Michael Zullo was onside and the goal should have stood.

> It was probably a blessing that Sydney went on to win the Final – which was more a war of attrition than a game of football

It was probably a blessing, therefore, that Sydney went on to win the Final – which was more a war of attrition than a game of football – on penalties after a goalless draw. Iran's Reza Ghoochannejhad slotted home the winning spot-kick, after Andy Keogh and Brendon Santalab had missed for Perth.

Sydney duly claimed a record-equalling fourth A-League crown, although even some of their own players seem unconvinced by the achievement. Retiring skipper Alex Brosque immediately called for the finals concept to be scrapped, asserting that "first past the post" was a fairer way of deciding who the champions really are.

And in that regard, Perth were streets in front.

Glory won the Premiership – their first trophy of the A-League era – by eight points from Sydney in second, losing just three times in the process. The arrival of Tony Popovic was the spur and a big, early recruitment drive paid dividends.

Socceroos Ivan Franjic, Jason Davidson, Matt Spiranovic, and especially Chris Ikonomidis and Neil Kilkenny, were all reborn under the notoriously detailed Popovic, while Diego Castro and Keogh provided goals aplenty. Only the biggest prize eluded them in front of 56,000 success-starved West Australians, but they can be pleased with their season.

Sydney were expected to dip after the departure of coach Graham Arnold to lead the national team and the loss of influential players Adrian Mierzejewski, Bobo and Jordy Buijs. But Arnold's number two, Steve Corica, won the title at his first attempt, relying on a core of seasoned local campaigners such as Rhyan Grant, who gained a place in Australia's Asian Cup squad, and former Bolton Wanderers striker Adam Le Fondre, who scored more than 20 goals in all competitions.

Champions in 2018, Melbourne Victory finished third and looked well placed to challenge for back-to-back titles. However, they fell apart in the semi-finals against Sydney, losing 6-1 – a result that saw the end of Kevin Muscat's reign as coach and his 14-year association with the club. Marquee man Keisuke Honda also left.

Adelaide United enjoyed an exciting season, finishing fourth and winning the FFA Cup for a second time, as well as going close to the Grand Final, under Marco Kurz. They lost a thrilling semi-final on penalties to Perth, after which their German coach quit Hindmarsh Stadium, much to the dismay of United's supporters.

Melbourne City were again the great underachievers, with a fifth-place finish and an early finals exit a poor reflection on such a talented squad. Questions remain

● PLAYER OF THE SEASON
Neil Kilkenny *(Perth Glory)*
Unwanted by Melbourne City, the midfielder had a fine campaign but his Grand Final was marred by having to play with damaged ankle ligaments.

● COACH OF THE SEASON
Steve Corica *(Sydney)*
The title, a Cup Final and a second-placed finish were beyond all expectations when he succeeded the club's most successful coach of all time in Graham Arnold.

● NEWCOMER OF THE SEASON
Sarpreet Singh
(Wellington Phoenix)
The 20 year-old playmaker is one of the few players of Indian extraction in the A-League.

Success ...Steve Corica

Review

about the future direction of the CFG-backed outfit, with City seemingly content to be a development club for now. Coach Warren Joyce departed at the end of the season.

Wellington Phoenix were sixth but their season was a triumph for Mark Rudan in his first senior coaching job. They made the finals for the first time in four years and in Fijian striker Roy Krishna they had the A-League's top scorer. Unfortunately, Rudan left at the end of the campaign and will now be in charge of new club Western United next season.

Of the rest, Newcastle couldn't build upon their Grand Final experience of last year and finished seventh, while Western Sydney Wanderers – who were hamstrung by their move away from Parramatta – limped home in eighth. Next year they will return to a new, redeveloped home arena where it's hoped they will recapture some of the atmosphere and drive that made them such a worthy addition to the A-League in their early years.

Brisbane Roar, who will be coached by Robbie Fowler next season, and Central Coast Mariners scrapped it out for the wooden spoon, with Mariners finishing bottom for the third time in four seasons. Frankly, though, both sides were awful – a word that can also be used to sum up the impact of VAR in the last two Grand Finals. WS

➤ at the Under-17 Africa Cup of Nations in April, Guinea are replaced in the World Cup by Senegal after being found guilty of age cheating.

Sunday May 19

AUSTRALIA: Sydney beat Perth Glory on penalties to win the A-League title for a fourth time.
BELGIUM: Vincent Kompany leaves Manchester City to become player-coach at Anderlecht, who miss out on European qualification for the first time in 56 years as they lose 2-1 at Gent.
BOLIVIA: Referee Victor Hugo Hurtado dies in hospital after collapsing during a top-flight league game between Always Ready and Oriente Petrolero.
CAF CONFEDERATION CUP: Togo striker Kodjo Fo-Doh Laba's late goal gives Moroccan side RS Berkane a 1-0 lead over Zamalek ahead of the second leg of the Final in Egypt.
EURO U-17s: Holland retain their title with a 4-2 victory over Italy and both finalists – along with Spain, France and Hungary – qualify for the World Cup finals this summer.
FRANCE: Lyon president Jean-Michel Aulas confirms Sylvinho will be the club's new coach after he stepped down from his position in charge of Brazil's under-23 team on Friday.
POLAND: Piast Gliwice win the title for the first time with a 1-0 victory over Lech Poznan.
SPAIN: Following a 2-0 victory over Real Madrid on the final day of the season, coach Quique Setien announces he is leaving Real Betis.
TURKEY: Galatasaray beat second-place Basaksehir 2-1 to secure the league title for a 22nd time.

Repeat...Holland retain their Euro under-17 title

Monday May 20

AFC CHAMP LGE: Abdulrahman Ghareeb scores in added time to send Al Ahli Saudi into the round of 16 with a 2-1 win at home to Pakhtakor of Uzbekistan.
AUSTRALIA: Kevin Muscat will stand down as Melbourne Victory coach after Wednesday's AFC Champions League game against Sanfrecce Hiroshima.
ENGLAND: Graham Potter leaves Swansea City and is appointed boss of Brighton & Hove Albion.
FRANCE: Saint-Etienne announce that coach Jean-Louis Gasset will leave the club this summer.
GERMANY: Stuttgart appoint Tim Walter as coach after he led Holstein Kiel to sixth place in the second tier.
SCOTLAND: Steve Clarke parts company with Kilmarnock and signs a three-year deal to become manager of Scotland.
SPAIN: Abelardo Fernandez resigns as coach of Alaves, saying he knew he would not be able to offer "100 per cent" next season. Osasuna return to La Liga after a two-year absence thanks to Granada's 1-0 win at Albacete.

Tuesday May 21

AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE: Wins for Shanghai SIPG and Urawa Red Diamonds see both sides progress to the knockout stage.
COSAFA CUP: Angola follow Madagascar and become the second team to withdraw from southern Africa's regional championship, which is due to begin on Saturday.
ENGLAND: Arsenal's Armenian midfielder Henrikh Mkhitaryan will not play in the Europa League Final against Chelsea in Baku over fears for his safety due to political tensions between Azerbaijan and his homeland.
GERMANY: Borussia Dortmund sign international left-back Nico Schulz from Hoffenheim for €27m.
NIGERIA: Lobi Stars coach Solomon Ogbeide, who led the club to the 2018 Nigerian title, collapses and dies on the way to hospital.
SPAIN: Alaves appoint former Real Sociedad boss Asier Garitano as their new coach.

Wednesday May 22

AFC CHAMP LEAGUE: Holders Kashima Antlers make it through to the knockout stage, along with Shandong Luneng and two-time winners Guangzhou Evergrande.
FRANCE: Rudi Garcia announces he is quitting as coach of Marseille ahead of Friday's final game of the season, at home to Montpellier.
GERMANY: Borussia Dortmund ➤

➤ sign Thorgan Hazard from Borussia Monchengladbach and Bayer Leverkusen's Julian Brandt for €25m each.
WORLD CUP: FIFA scraps plans to expand the Qatar 2022 finals to 48 teams, a move that would have required hosting duties to be shared with other countries in the region.

Thursday May 23

CHINA: Marcello Lippi, who resigned after the AFC Asian Cup in January, is reappointed coach.
SERBIA: Bojan Ostojic scores the only goal of the game as Partizan beat Red Star 1-0 to win the Cup and deny their Belgrade rivals a domestic double.
U-20 WORLD CUP: Hosting their first-ever FIFA tournament, Poland lose 2-0 to Colombia in their opening game. Amadou Sagna's goal after 9.6 seconds as Senegal beat Tahiti 3-0 in the fastest in the history of the finals.

Friday May 24

CAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE: In the first leg of the Final, holders Esperance draw 1-1 in Morocco against Wydad, who have Brahim Nekkach sent off.
FRANCE: Despite losing 3-1 at Reims in their last fixture of the season, Paris Saint-Germain become the first team to score in all 38 of their games in Ligue 1. Fabien Mercadal leaves Caen after their relegation to Ligue 2.

Saturday May 25

BRAZIL: Neymar is replaced as national captain by Dani Alves.
FRANCE: Thomas Tuchel extends his contract as Paris Saint-Germain coach until 30 June 2021.
GERMANY: Bayern Munich clinch a 12th domestic double, beating RB Leipzig 3-0 in the cup Final.
PORTUGAL: Porto score a 121st-minute equaliser to draw 2-2 with Sporting in extra-time but then lose the cup Final on penalties.
SCOTLAND: Celtic caretaker manager Neil Lennon is offered the role permanently in the dressing-room shower after his side beat Hearts 2-1 in the Scottish Cup Final to complete a third consecutive domestic treble.
SPAIN: Kevin Gameiro and Rodrigo are on target as Valencia beat Barcelona 2-1 in the Spanish Cup Final and deny them the double.

Sunday May 26

CAF CONFED CUP: Zamalek of

China

JOHN DUERDEN

Lippi back in charge

Veteran Italian coach returns to lead national side

What do you do when the 2022 World Cup is fast approaching and your current team is not good enough to qualify, while recent investment in young talent is not expected to pay dividends for a few more years yet?

In China's case, they are starting to think about bringing in outside help – and not just with the return of Marcello Lippi as coach. For the first time ever, China could consider selecting players born outside the Middle Kingdom.

The 71-year-old Italian knows better than perhaps any outsider that China – a country of 1.4 billion that has only qualified once for the World Cup, back in 2002 – still lacks the required talent.

His first spell in charge of the national side ended after 27 months, in January, with a quarter-final exit at the Asian Cup. The fact that he had selected the oldest squad at the tournament, with an average age of 29.2, suggested that he does not see the younger players coming through as good enough to replace the veterans.

On the face of it, not much has changed in the four months Lippi spent back home in Italy before returning to Beijing at the end of May. There is one major development, however, and that is naturalisation.

The first part of this plan involves tapping into the extensive Chinese diaspora. Nico Yennaris, who was born in England and came up through Arsenal's ranks before joining Brentford in 2014, was signed by Beijing Guoan early this year. With a Chinese mother, the former England youth international was much sought after, not just for his talent but because he could be registered as a local player and not as a foreigner, which is extremely important as Chinese Super League clubs are allowed to field just three imports. All he had to do was to take Chinese citizenship – which he did along with Norwegian-born striker Jon Hou Saeter, who also joined Beijing Guoan.

Yennaris, who is now known as Li Ke, impressed in the CSL and was called up by Lippi in May, becoming the first naturalised player to be capped by China on making his international debut against Philippines in June. There was little controversy over his selection and there are is now interest in Manchester United winger Tahith Chong, who has been capped by Holland at under-21 level.

And it is not just the diaspora that offers possibilities, with reports in the Chinese media suggesting that Lippi may go a step further.

The massive increase in spending by CSL clubs in the past decade has brought all kinds of big names to the country. Most were fully fledged internationals – but not all. For example, Elkeson and Ricardo Goulart did get call ups by Brazil but neither made the pitch. After spending five years in China both are now eligible, according to FIFA regulations, for selection by Lippi.

Elkeson has expressed interest in the past and,

Eligible...Brazil-born Elkeson of Shanghai SIPG

Return... Marcello Lippi

Egypt end a 16-year continental drought, beating Moroccan side RS Berkane on penalties after a 1-1 draw on aggregate in the Final.
ITALY: Atalanta beat Sassuolo 3-1 and qualify for the Champions League for the first time, where they are joined by Internazionale who relegate Empoli with a 2-1 win.

Monday May 27

ENGLAND: Aston Villa beat Derby County 2-1 in the play-off Final with goals from Anwar El Ghazi and John McGinn to secure promotion to the Premier League.
GERMANY: Union Berlin will play in the Bundesliga for the first time next season, beating Stuttgart on away goals after a 2-2 draw in the promotion/relegation play-off.
SPAIN: Atletico Madrid sign Porto defender Felipe for €20m.

Tuesday May 28

FRANCE: Marseille appoint Andre Villas-Boas as coach.
ITALY: Sporting director Leonardo and coach Gennaro Gattuso part company with Milan.
JAPAN: Despite reaching the AFC Champions League knockout stage, Urawa Red Diamonds release coach Oswaldo Oliveira after Sunday's 4-0 loss to Sanfrecce Hiroshima left the side 11th in the J.League.
QATAR: Ex Barcelona and Spain midfielder Xavi replaces Portuguese coach Jesualdo Ferreira at Al Sadd.
SPAIN: Police arrest several current and former players, as well as club officials, from Spain's top two divisions following a complaint from La Liga about a game in May 2018 that was possibly fixed by "an organised criminal group".

Wednesday May 29

EUROPA LEAGUE: Eden Hazard scores twice in Baku as Chelsea beat Arsenal 4-1 in the Final to give Maurizio Sarri the first trophy of his managerial career.
ITALY: Palermo win an appeal against automatic demotion to Serie C and are docked 20 points instead, therefore staying in Serie B.

Thursday May 30

ITALY: Internazionale sack coach Luciano Spalletti after finishing fourth in Serie A.
RECOPA SUDAMERICANA: River Plate of Argentina beat Brazil's Athletico Paranaense 3-0 to overturn a 1-0 first-leg deficit and win the trophy for a third time.
U-20 WORLD CUP: Norway set ➤

New cap...Li Ke of Beijing Guoan

according to Shanghai newspaper *Oriental Sports Daily*, Goulart wants to sign up. Should it all go through, the national team's front line could have a very different look when World Cup qualification starts.

China have never been a consistent Asian power, usually below the top teams such as South Korea, Japan and Iran. But that could all change. Elkeson has scored over 100 times for Guangzhou Evergrande and Shanghai SIPG, while Goulart has arguably been the league's best player in recent years.

Despite their popularity, reaction to their potential call-ups has been mixed, and probably leaning towards the negative. Even supporters agree that it exposes the failure of the Chinese football system to date. There are also concerns as to whether it will change the character of the team.

The Global Times, a newspaper and mouthpiece for the government, seems unsure but has noted that countries that do have respected youth development systems, such as Spain, have handed out caps to the likes of Brazilian-born Diego Costa. However, the publication did call for any player who does become naturalised to learn to speak Chinese, which is a requirement that may be a little optimistic.

Some qualms would surely disappear if Elkeson and Goulart were to make the difference between qualifying for Qatar or not.

Lippi, who is on a one-year contract as national coach with an option to extend, is unlikely to worry about anything other than becoming just the second man to take the world's most populous country to its most popular competition. WS

Libertadores Cup

TIM VICKERY

Big guns pull through

Brazilian and Argentinian sides dominate the group stage as usual

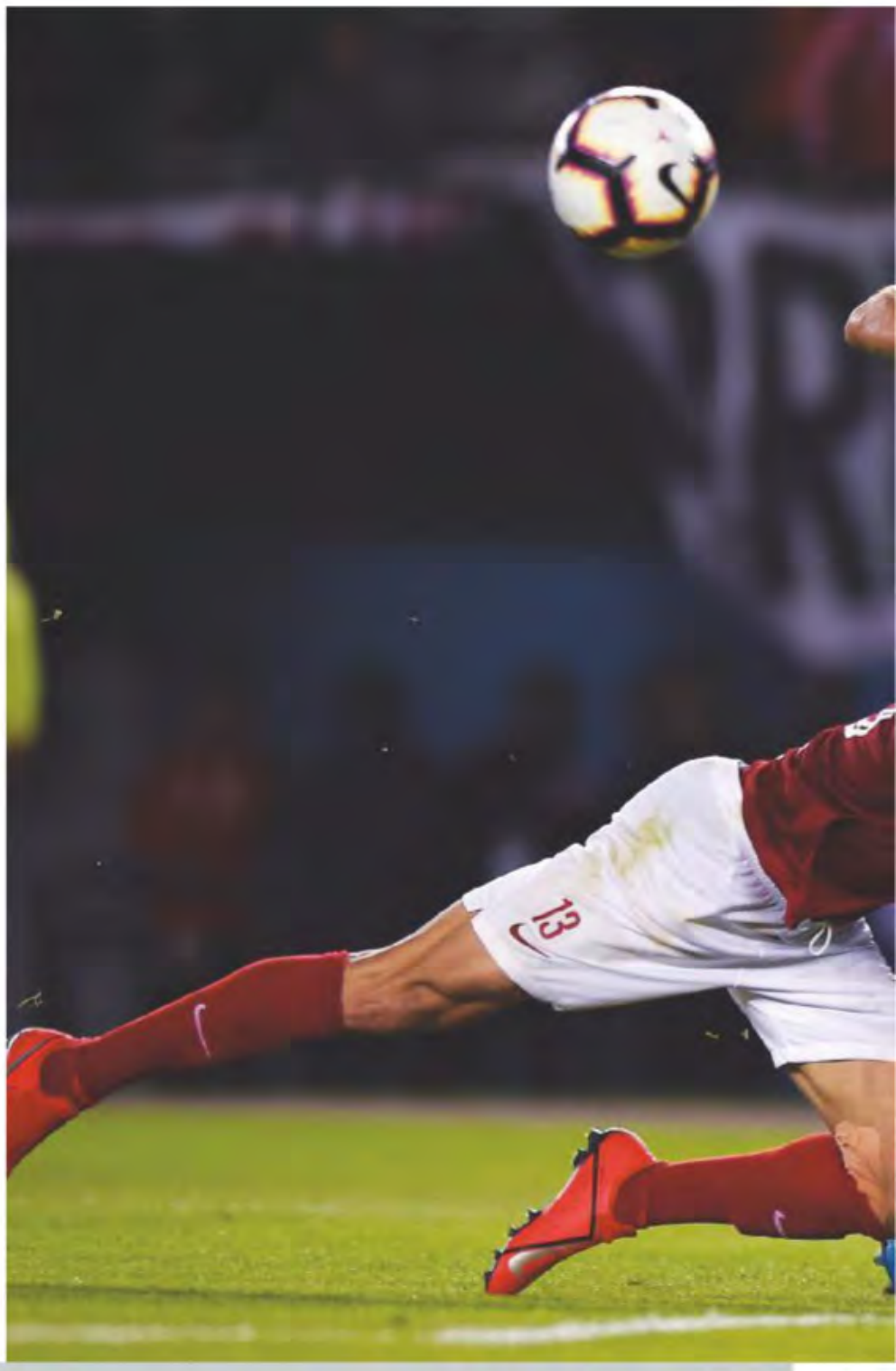
Halfway through the group phase of the 2019 Libertadores Cup, reigning champions River Plate of Argentina had yet to win a game. The previous year's winners, Gremio of Brazil, were in an even tighter spot with just one point from three games and facing a possibility that even three wins would not be enough to make it to the knockout stage.

In the end, both teams got through – as did most of the big names in the competition. Just two former winners fell by the wayside, and for Penarol of Uruguay it was the seventh consecutive group-phase elimination. The other casualty were Brazil's Atletico Mineiro, bundled out quickly as a consequence of poor defending – which was no surprise to anyone who saw them last year.

Of the last 16, all but five have won the trophy before and only five of the continent's 10 countries are still represented. For a sixth successive year, no Peruvian side has made it through, and it is the second consecutive year in the case of Bolivia. Venezuela suffered a ninth wipeout in 10 years, while, perhaps more surprisingly, for Chile it was their fourth in five campaigns. All the Colombian teams were also eliminated, which continues the country's poor run since Atletico Nacional lifted the trophy in 2016.

That date is significant as the format was changed the following year, with more slots handed to Brazil and Argentina, and the tournament extended. Instead of being crammed into the first six months, the Libertadores now runs all the way to late November. That means there are more opportunities for sides to lose and gain players. This has clearly benefited the richer clubs from the south of the continent, who are better able to maintain competitive squads over the full course of the calendar year. Brazil and Argentina have proved utterly dominant, supplying all of the subsequent finalists and all but three of the 16 quarter finalists.

Probably the outstanding feature of this year's group phase was the superb performance of the Paraguayan trio. For the second successive year, the country did not lose a single team in the group phase. This term – with a number of veterans from the 2010 World Cup shining brightly – Libertad, Cerro Porteno and Olimpia cruised into the last 16, all of them finishing top of their group.



Challenge... Rodrigo Dourado of Internacional goes down under pressure from River Plate's Luciano Lollo

Of the last 16, all but five have won the trophy before and only five of the continent's 10 countries are still represented

Out...Brazil's Atletico Mineiro (in white)

Paraguay's success, though, merely highlights the stranglehold that the south of the continent has held. although Ecuador continues to carry the fight for the north. For the second time in three years, both Emelec and LDU are through, both saving themselves with last-day victories.

In getting over the line, Nacional of Uruguay saw Atletico become the only Brazilians to fall. And although Argentinian sides Huracan and Rosario Central finished bottom of their groups, the two traditional giants supply 10 of the last 16.

The Brazilians tended to win their groups, with four of their qualifiers finishing top, whereas the Argentinians, with the exception of Boca Juniors, came second.

Theoretically, the group winners are favoured by the draw and face runners-up, who on paper are weaker. They also play the second leg at home – although the statistics show that this is not always the case, in no small part as a consequence of the away goals rule. It

also means that three of the last eight clashes pit Brazilian sides against Argentinian opposition, with the opening game, River Plate versus Cruzeiro, the glamour tie of the round. WS

Sudamericana Cup

Through...Zulia of Venezuela

Played on a home-and-away knockout basis all the way to a one-off Final, the Sudamericana takes three months to whittle a field of 44 down to 22. These are joined by 10 teams eliminated from the Libertadores Cup.

Only two nations are left without an interest this year: Paraguay, who have had considerable success in the Libertadores, and Chile, who saw all their teams knocked out of continental competition before the end of May.

Brazil and Argentina supply seven of the last 16, with November's Final being played in the Paraguayan capital Asuncion.

➤ a new competition record in beating Honduras 12-0, with Erling Haaland also setting a new best mark with nine goals in the game.

Friday May 31

CAF CHAMP LEAGUE: Esperance of Tunisia are declared the winners when Morocco's Wydad refuse to continue playing and the second leg of the Final is abandoned after 60 minutes when VAR is unable to judge a disallowed equaliser.
EGYPT: Christian Gross leaves Zamalek less than a week after leading the side to victory in the CAF Confederation Cup.
ITALY: Internazionale appoint Antonio Conte as coach.

Saturday June 1

SPAIN: Former international winger Jose Antonio Reyes, who now plays for Extremadura in the Segunda Division, is killed in a car crash.
UEFA CHAMP LEAGUE: In the Final in Madrid, Liverpool beat Tottenham Hotspur 2-0 to become European champions for a sixth time.

Sun June 2

FRANCE: Dijon preserve their Ligue 1 status with a 4-2 aggregate win against Lens.
ITALY: Trailing 2-0 from the away leg, Verona beat Cittadella 3-0 to clinch promotion to Serie A.

Monday June 3

CLUB WORLD CUP: The FIFA Council meeting in Paris confirms Qatar as host of the next two Club World Cups, in 2019 and 2020.

Tuesday June 4

AFRICA CUP OF NATIONS: The Court of Arbitration for Sport rules Cameroon should be allowed to take part in the finals.
SPAIN: Real Madrid confirm the signing of Luka Jovic from Eintracht Frankfurt for €60m. Former Real and national coach Julen Lopetegui takes charge of Sevilla. Allegations are published by *El Mundo* that Valladolid conspired to lose their last game of the season, 2-0 to Valencia, who qualified for the Champions League at the expense of Getafe.
UEFA: Lennart Johansson, who was UEFA president from April 1990 to January 2007, dies aged 89 following a short illness.

Out...Neymar

Wednesday June 5

BRAZIL: Neymar ruptures ankle ligaments playing in a friendly against Qatar and will miss the Copa America.
CAF CHAMP LEAGUE: Esperance are told they must return the trophy and their winners medals and the abandoned second leg of the Final against Wydad will now be replayed.
FIFA: Gianni Infantino is re-elected unopposed for a four-year term as president at FIFA's annual congress in Paris.
UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE: Cristiano Ronaldo gets a hat-trick as hosts Portugal beat Switzerland 3-1 in the semi-finals.

Thursday June 6

FRANCE: CAF president Ahmad is arrested and questioned by police in Paris investigating corruption.
ITALY: Rocco Commisso is the new owner of Fiorentina.
UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE: Two defensive errors in extra-time hand Holland a 3-1 win over England and a place in the Final.

Friday June 7

SPAIN: Real Madrid agree to pay Chelsea an initial €100m fee to sign Eden Hazard.

Saturday June 8

COSAFA CUP: Zambia beat Botswana 1-0 in the Final to win the Council of Southern Africa Football Associations title for a fifth time.
ENGLAND: Former Tottenham Hotspur full-back Justin Edinburgh, who was manager of Leyton Orient as they won promotion back to the Football League this season, dies at the age of 49, five days after suffering cardiac arrest.
EURO QUALIFIERS: Turkey win 2-0 against France, who fail to manage a shot on target in a game for the first time in 10 years. Russia's 9-0 defeat of San Marino is their biggest-ever victory.
MONTENEGRO: Serbian-born coach Ljubisa Tumbakovic is sacked by Montenegro for failing to take ➤

➤ charge of the side's Euro qualifier against Kosovo.

Sunday June 9

UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE: A goal from Goncalo Guedes against Holland sees Portugal crowned champions of the inaugural Nations League tournament.

Monday June 10

EURO QUALIFIERS: On the night he equals Jakub Blaszczykowski's national record of 106 caps, Robert Lewandowski scores from the penalty spot as Poland beat Israel 4-0. Slovenia record their best ever win in a competitive away game, beating Latvia 5-0 in Riga.

Tuesday June 11

ITALY: Roma appoint former Shakhtar Donetsk boss Paulo Fonseca as coach.
SOUTH KOREA: A 1-0 victory over Ecuador in the Under-20 World Cup sees South Korea reach the Final of a men's FIFA tournament for the first time.
SLOVAKIA: Marek Hamsik scores twice to become his country's all-time record scorer with 24 goals as Slovakia beat Azerbaijan 5-1.
WORLD CUP QUALS: Despite losing 2-1 to Brunei Darussalam, Mongolia win 3-2 on aggregate and reach the second stage of the Asian qualifiers for the first time.

Wednesday June 12

ENGLAND: Ole Gunnar Solskjaer completes his first signing as manager of Manchester United, buying 21-year-old Wales winger Daniel James from Swansea City for an initial fee of £15m.
ITALY: Agent Mino Raiola will be able to broker transfers everywhere except in his homeland of Italy after the Court of Arbitration for Sport suspended his FIFA worldwide ban.
SCOTLAND: Hibernian chairman Rod Petrie is confirmed as the new president of the Scottish FA.
SPAIN: Real Madrid sign Lyon defender Ferland Mendy for €48m plus up to €5m in performance-related bonuses.

Thursday June 13

COPA AMERICA: Australia and Qatar accept invitations to compete in next year's tournament.
ENGLAND: Former Croatia coach Slaven Bilic is appointed manager of Championship side West Bromwich Albion.
IRAN: Italian coach Andrea Stramaccioni signs a two-year deal with Pro League side Esteghlal. WS

CAF Champions League

MARK GLEESON

Final descends into farce

Esperance declared winners then told to replay the game

African club competition Finals have previously produced some barely believable drama – like when a player cut himself to pretend he had been struck by an object from the crowd – but this year's Champions League plummeted to new depths.

Officially, the outcome is still to be resolved after Morocco's Wydad walked off the pitch 30 minutes from the end of the second leg in Tunisia, claiming a conspiracy over the Video Assistant Referee. Or, rather, the lack thereof.

Initially the hosts, Esperance, were declared winners on the night, after a 90-minute stand-off as Wydad refused to play on, and handed the trophy – only to be told less than a week later to return the trophy and their medals.

CAF's executive committee came to the bizarre conclusion that "the conditions of game and safety were not met during the second leg, preventing the match from coming to an end" and have ordered the second leg to be replayed, on neutral territory, but only after the conclusion of the Africa Cup of Nations in Egypt.

The decision earned instant derision across the continent, with Esperance mounting a legal challenge that is likely to drag the saga well past the start of the 2019-20 campaign and add further ignominy to an already farcical situation

> To understand the drama as it unfolded, it helps to understand the influence that Morocco now enjoys within CAF

To better understand the drama as it unfolded, it helps to understand the influence that Morocco now enjoys within CAF, whose president Ahmad spends much time there and has had many of his pet projects bankrolled by an eager Moroccan federation as the country looks to use football as a diplomatic tool in improving relationships with other African countries.

Morocco Football Federation president Fouzi Lekjaa was named "third vice-president" of CAF by Ahmad, a position he created despite there being no such leeway in the organisation's statutes.

The first leg of the Final in Morocco was marked by two VAR calls, both of which went against Wydad but were bravely called by Egyptian referee Gehad Grisha, who was suspended just days later for six months.

He called back a Wydad "goal" after a handball in the build-up and when there was not enough evidence to show that an Esperance defender had lifted his hand to block a close-in shot from the hosts late in the game, he correctly opted not to award Wydad a penalty.

On top of that he sent off the Wydad captain Brahim Nakach after issuing him a second caution for a mindless studs-up challenge.

To the neutral eye, Grisha withstood immense pressure and barracking to deliver a performance that exemplified improving refereeing standards on the continent. Yet within days his career was effectively destroyed after a letter from Lekjaa to CAF.

It was the first major VAR decision in African football for a system that had only been previously used in last year's continental club competition Finals.

Esperance took the lead in the first leg through Fousseny Coulibaly just before half-time only for his

Protection...Wydad players leave the pitch in Tunisia

fellow Ivorian Cheick Ibrahim Comara to equalise late in the match to ensure a 1-1 draw.

Esperance went ahead in the second leg as their supporters packed the stadium at Rades, on the outskirts of Tunis, in anticipation of a rare back-to-back double in the competition.

Youcef Belaili curled in a strike from the edge of the penalty area in the 41st minute after a defence splitting pass from London-born Aymen Ben Mohamed. But the drama started on the hour mark when Wydad felt they had equalised but the header from Ismail El Haddad was disallowed for an infringement. It was not clear whether he had pulled at a defender just before getting to the ball or was offside. Wydad players immediately surrounded the referee demanding he review the decision and consult VAR.

It would later emerge the VAR was not working and that both clubs knew about it before the match, according to CAF's refereeing boss Souleiman Hassan Waberi of Djibouti, who confirmed this with the press the day after the final only to then vote for a replay along with his ExCo colleagues.

Wydad's bench ran onto the pitch to add to the haranguing, to the bemusement of the crowd who waited patiently as a train of officials came to the side of the pitch to try and solve the situation. Even Ahmad spent 30 minutes in discussion with the officials in a futile effort to get the game restarted, and the scenes of endless bickering must count as one of the low points in African football history.

Confusion...refere Bakary Gassama explains that the VAR is not working

Eventually referee Bakary Gassama of Gambia declared the contest in favour of the home team in what was the only conceivable outcome, particularly when the VAR protocols, clearly state: "The match continues as normal without VAR. A match is not invalidated because of malfunction(s) of the VAR technology; wrong decision(s) involving the VAR (as the VAR is a match official); decision(s) not to review an incident or review(s) of a non-reviewable situation/decision."

It is certain there is more drama to come as the legal process now gets underway. It is sure to be a riveting soap opera. WS

ESM XI

EUROPEAN SPORTS MEDIA

HOW IT WORKS Every month, journalists from each member of the European Sports Media group select their first XI based on the best individual performances from Europe's top competitions. For details of how each ESM member voted, visit worldsoccer.com/esm11

SEASON RANKINGS Cumulative votes through the season

GOALKEEPERS

Marc-Andre TER STEGEN (Barcelona)	25
ALISSON (Liverpool)	21
Jan OBLAK (Atletico Madrid)	16
EDERSON (Manchester City)	14
David DE GEA (Manchester United)	7
Wojciech SZCZESNY (Juventus)	5
Thibaut COURTOIS (Real Madrid)	4
Gianluigi DONNARUMMA (Milan)	4
Roman BURKI (Borussia Dortmund)	2
Peter GULACSI (RB Leipzig)	2
Hugo LLORIS (Tottenham Hotspur)	2
NETO (Valencia)	2
Salvatore SIRIGU (Torino)	2
Kevin TRAPP (Paris Saint-Germain)	2
Petr CECH (Arsenal)	1
Ralf FAHRMANN (Schalke)	1
Mike MAIGNAN (Lille)	1
Jordi MASIP (Real Valladolid)	1
Oier OLAZABAL (Levante)	1
Rui PATRICIO (Wolverhampton Wanderers)	1
Andrii PIATOV (Shakthar Donetsk)	1
Jordan PICKFORD (Everton)	1

DEFENDERS

Virgil VAN DIJK (Liverpool)	70
Jordi ALBA (Barcelona)	30
Gerard PIQUE (Barcelona)	28
Matthijs DE LIGT (Ajax)	20
Trent ALEXANDER-ARNOLD (Liverpool)	18
Giorgio CHIELLINI (Juventus)	17
Leonardo BONUCCI (Juventus)	16
Joshua KIMMICH (Bayern Munich)	16
ALEX SANDRO (Juventus)	15
Andrew ROBERTSON (Liverpool)	15
Joao CANCELO (Juventus)	14
Ashraf HAKIMI (Borussia Dortmund)	13
Kalidou KOULIBALY (Napoli)	10
Aymeric LAPORTE (Manchester City)	10
MARQUINHOS (Paris Saint-Germain)	8
Sergio RAMOS (Real Madrid)	8
Jose GIMENEZ (Atletico Madrid)	7
Thomas MEUNIER (Paris Saint-Germain)	7
Lukasz PISZCZEK (Borussia Dortmund)	7
Vincent KOMPANY (Manchester City)	6
Kyle WALKER (Manchester City)	6
Marcos ALONSO (Chelsea)	4
Juan BERNAT (Paris Saint-Germain)	4
Diego GODIN (Atletico Madrid)	4
Thiago SILVA (Paris Saint-Germain)	4
Manuel AKANJI (Borussia Dortmund)	3
David ALABA (Bayern Munich)	3
Santiago ARIAS (Atletico Madrid)	3
Daley BLIND (Ajax)	3
Danny DA COSTA (Eintracht Frankfurt)	3
DAVID LUIZ (Chelsea)	3
Marcel HALSTENBERG (RB Leipzig)	3
Filip KOSTIC (Eintracht Frankfurt)	3
Eder MILITAO (Porto)	3
Sergi ROBERTO (Barcelona)	3
Milan SKRINIAR (Internazionale)	3
Jan VERTONGHEN (Tottenham Hotspur)	3
Leo DUBOIS (Lyon)	2
Nico ELVEDI (Borussia Monchengladbach)	2
Joe GOMEZ (Liverpool)	2
Makoto HASEBE (Eintracht Frankfurt)	2
Lucas HERNANDEZ (Atletico Madrid)	2
Thilo KEHRER (Paris Saint-Germain)	2
Victor LINDELOF (Manchester United)	2
MARCELO (Real Madrid)	2
Joel MATIP (Liverpool)	2
Willy ORBAN (RB Leipzig)	2
Nicolas OTAMENDI (Manchester City)	2
Alessio ROMAGNOLI (Milan)	2
Nelson SEMEDO (Barcelona)	2
Niklas SULE (Bayern Munich)	2
Alex TELLES (Porto)	2
Toby ALDERWEIRELD (Tottenham Hotspur)	1
Cesar AZPILICUETA (Chelsea)	1
Dani CARVAJAL (Real Madrid)	1
Ben CHILWELL (Leicester City)	1
Abdou DIALO (Borussia Dortmund)	1
FILIPE LUIS (Atletico Madrid)	1
Junior FIRPO (Real Betis)	1
GABRIEL Paulista (Valencia)	1
Matthias GINTER (Borussia M'gladbach)	1
Hans HATEBOER (Atalanta)	1
Mats HUMMELS (Bayern Munich)	1
Laurent KOSCIELNY (Arsenal)	1
Kenny LALA (Strasbourg)	1
Dejan LOVREN (Liverpool)	1
MARCELO (Lyon)	1
Benjamin MENDY (Manchester City)	1
Ferland MENDY (Lyon)	1
Sokratis PAPASTATHOPOULOS (Arsenal)	1
Benjamin PAVARD (Stuttgart)	1
Danny ROSE (Tottenham Hotspur)	1
Daniele RUGANI (Juventus)	1
Nico SCHULZ (Hoffenheim)	1
Nicolas TAGLIAFICO (Ajax)	1
Omer TOPRAK (Borussia Dortmund)	1
Hamari TRAORE (Rennes)	1
Kieran TRIPPIER (Tottenham Hotspur)	1
Aleksandr ZINCHENKO (Manchester City)	1

MIDFIELDERS

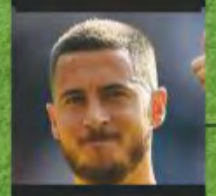
Eden HAZARD (Chelsea)	37
Paul POGBA (Manchester United)	23
Marco REUS (Borussia Dortmund)	17
David SILVA (Manchester City)	14
Bernardo SILVA (Manchester City)	12
Frenkie DE JONG (Ajax)	11
Leroy SANE (Manchester City)	11
Donny VAN DE BEEK (Ajax)	11
Axel WITSEL (Borussia Dortmund)	11
N'Golo KANTE (Chelsea)	10
Jadon SANCHO (Borussia Dortmund)	10
Dusan TADIC (Ajax)	9
Christian ERIKSEN (Tottenham Hotspur)	8
Miralem PJANIC (Juventus)	8
FERNANDINHO (Manchester City)	7
Leon GORETZKA (Bayern Munich)	7
Julian BRANDT (Bayer Leverkusen)	6
Ivan RAKITIC (Barcelona)	6
Philippe COUTINHO (Barcelona)	5
Angel DI MARIA (Paris Saint-Germain)	5
Bruno FERNANDES (Sporting)	5
JORGINHO (Chelsea)	5
Nicolas PEPE (Lille)	5
Kevin DE BRUYNE (Manchester City)	4
Thorgan HAZARD (Borussia M'gladbach)	4
Jordan HENDERSON (Liverpool)	4
Marco VERRATTI (Paris Saint-Germain)	4
Georginio WIJNALDUM (Liverpool)	4
ARTHUR (Barcelona)	3
FABINHO (Liverpool)	3
Joao FELIX (Benfica)	3
Ilkay GUNDOGAN (Mancheser City)	3
Dani PAREJO (Valencia)	3
Pablo SARABIA (Sevilla)	3
Nicolo ZANIOLO (Roma)	3
Rodrigo BENTANCUR (Juventus)	2
Thomas DELANEY (Borussia Dortmund)	2
Memphis DEPAY (Lyon)	2
Alejandro GOMEZ (Atalanta)	2
ISCO (Real Madrid)	2
Naby KEITA (Liverpool)	2
Javi MARTINEZ (Bayern Munich)	2
Blaise MATUIDI (Juventus)	2
James MILNER (Liverpool)	2

TEAM OF THE SEASON

Based on appearances in the monthly ESM Eleven

Sadio Mane
Liverpool
●●●

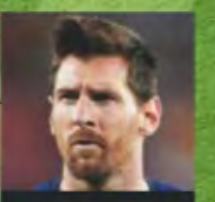
Cristiano Ronaldo
Juventus
●●●●



Eden Hazard
Chelsea
●●●*

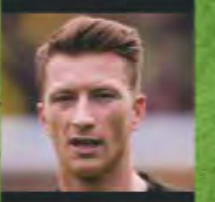
Jordi Alba
Barcelona
●●●●●●

Gerard Pique
Barcelona
●●●



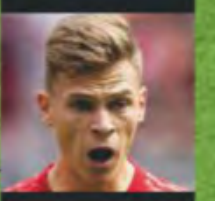
Lionel Messi
Barcelona
●●●●●●●●

Paul Pogba
Manchester United
●●●*

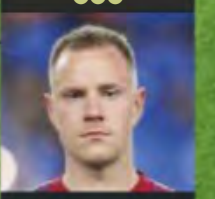


Marco Reus
Borussia Dortmund
●●●*

Virgil Van Dijk
Liverpool
●●●●●●●●●



Joshua Kimmich
Bayern Munich
●●●



Marc-Andre Ter Stegen
Barcelona
●●●●

MANE · MESSI · RONALDO · HAZARD · POGBA · REUS · ALBA · PIQUE · VAN DIJK · KIMMICH · TER STEGEN

*David Silva (Manchester City) also had 3 apps but received fewer individual votes during the season (15 compared to Hazard 37, Pogba 23, Reus 17)

Luka MODRIC (Real Madrid)	2
Saul NIGUEZ (Atletico Madrid)	2
Cengiz UNDER (Roma)	2
Ever BANEGA (Sevilla)	1
Ross BARKLEY (Chelsea)	1
Federico BERNARDESCHI (Juventus)	1
Sergio BUSQUETS (Barcelona)	1
Emre CAN (Juventus)	1
CASEMIRO (Real Madrid)	1
Maxwell CORNET (Lyon)	1
DANILO (Porto)	1
Gerard DEULOFEU (Watford)	1
Javairo DILROSUN (Hertha Berlin)	1
Julian DRAXLER (Paris Saint-Germain)	1
Ondrej DUDA (Hertha Berlin)	1
Andre GOMES (Everton)	1
Kai HAVERTZ (Leverkusen)	1
Ander HERRERA (Manchester United)	1
Hector HERRERA (Porto)	1
Josip ILICIC (Atalanta)	1
JONY (Alaves)	1
Franck KESSIE (Milan)	1
Sami KHEDIRA (Juventus)	1
Thomas LEMAR (Atletico Madrid)	1
Giovani LO CELSO (Real Betis)	1
Riyad MAHREZ (Manchester City)	1
Gelson MARTINS (Monaco)	1
Jaime MATA (Getafe)	1
Sergej MILINKOVIC-SAVIC (Lazio)	1
Joao MOUTINHO (W'hampton Wanderers)	1
Jesus NAVAS (Sevilla)	1
Thomas PARTEY (Atletico Madrid)	1
PIZZI (Benfica)	1
Matteo POLITANO (Internazionale)	1
RODRI (Valencia)	1
James RODRIGUEZ (Bayern Munich)	1
Lucas TORREIRA (Arsenal)	1
Oliver TORRES (Porto)	1
WILLIAN (Chelsea)	1
Granit XHAKA (Arsenal)	1

FORWARDS

Lionel MESSI (Barcelona)	84
Cristiano RONALDO (Juventus)	30
Kylian MBAPPE (Paris Saint-Germain)	28
Raheem STERLING (Manchester City)	26
Sadio MANE (Liverpool)	16
Sergio AGUERO (Manchester City)	15
Krzysztof PIATEK (Genoa/Milan)	15
Mohamed SALAH (Liverpool)	13
Paco ALCACER (Borussia Dortmund)	12
Duvan ZAPATA (Atalanta)	10
Luis SUAREZ (Barcelona)	9
Pierre-Emerick AUBAMEYANG (Arsenal)	8
NEYMAR (Paris Saint-Germain)	8
Andre SILVA (Sevilla)	8
Robert LEWANDOWSKI (Bayern Munich)	7
Fabio QUAGLIARELLA (Sampdoria)	7
SON Heung-min (Tottenham Hotspur)	7
Hakim ZIYECH (Ajax)	7
Mauro ICARDI (Internazionale)	6
LUCAS MOURA (Tottenham Hotspur)	6
Luka JOVIC (Eintracht Frankfurt)	5
Divock ORIGI (Liverpool)	5
Karim BENZEMA (Real Madrid)	4
Harry KANE (Tottenham Hotrspur)	4
Max KRUSE (Werder Bremen)	4
Edinson CAVANI (Paris Saint-Germain)	3
Ousmane DEMBELE (Barcelona)	3
Dries MERTENS (Napoli)	3
Olivier GIROUD (Chelsea)	2
Lorenzo INSIGNE (Napoli)	2
Moise KEAN (Juventus)	2
Marcus RASHFORD (Manchester United)	2
ROBERTO FIRMINO (Liverpool)	2
Lucas ALARIO (Bayer Leverkusen)	1
Iago ASPAS (Celta Vigo)	1
Gareth BALE (Real Madrid)	1
Kingsley COMAN (Bayern Munich)	1
Goncalo GUEDES (Valencia)	1
Sebastien HALLER (Eintracht Frankfurt)	1
Gonzalo HIGUAIN (Chelsea)	1
Borja IGLESIAS (Espanyol)	1
Alexandre LACAZETTE (Arsenal)	1
David NERES (Ajax)	1
RODRIGO (Valencia)	1
Cristhian STUANI (Girona)	1
Jamie VARDY (Leicester City)	1

Club football

EUROPE

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Semi-finals

1st legs

Apr 30

Tottenham Hotspur (Eng) 0
Ajax (Hol) 1 (Van de Beek 15)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 60,243. **Ref:** Mateu Lahoz (Spa)
Tottenham: Lloris - Alderweireld, Sanchez, Vertonghen (Sissoko 39), Wanyama, Trippier (Foyth 80), Eriksen, Alli, Rose (Davies 79), Llorente, Lucas Moura.
Ajax: Onana - Veltman, De Ligt, Blind, Tagliafico, Schone (Mazraoui 65), De Jong, Ziyech (Huntelaar 87), Van de Beek, David Neres, Tadic.

May1

Barcelona (Spa) 3 (Suarez 26, Messi 75, 82)
Liverpool (Eng) 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 98,299. **Ref:** Kuipers (Hol)
Barcelona: Ter Stegen - Sergi Roberto (Alena 90+3), Pique, Lenglet, Jordi Alba, Vidal, Rakitic, Busquets, Philippe Coutinho (Nelson Semedo 60), Messi, Suarez (Dembele 90+3).
Liverpool: Alisson - Gomez, Matip, Van Dijk, Robertson, Milner (Origi 84), Fabinho, Keita (Henderson 24), Salah, Wijnaldum (Roberto Firmino 78), Mane.

2nd legs

May 7

Liverpool 4 (Origi 7, 79, Wijnaldum 54, 56)
Barcelona 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 55,212. **Ref:** Cakir (Tur)
Liverpool 4-3 on agg
Liverpool: Alisson - Alexander-Arnold, Matip, Van Dijk, Robertson (Wijnaldum 46), Henderson, Fabinho, Milner, Shaqiri (Sturridge 90), Origi (Gomez 85), Mane.
Barcelona: Ter Stegen - Sergi Roberto, Pique, Lenglet, Jordi Alba, Vidal (Arthur 75), Busquets, Rakitic (Malcom 80), Philippe Coutinho (Nelson Semedo 60), Messi, Suarez.

May 8

Ajax 2 (De Ligt 5, Ziyech 35)
Tottenham Hotspur 3 (Lucas Moura 55, 59, 90+6)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 52,641. **Ref:** Brych (Ger)
Agg 3-3, Tottenham Hotspur on away goals
Ajax: Onana - Mazraoui, De Ligt, Blind, Tagliafico, Schone (Veltman 60), De Jong, Ziyech, Van de Beek (Magallan 90), Tadic, Dolberg (Sinkgraven 67).
Tottenham: Lloris - Trippier (Lamela 81), Alderweireld, Vertonghen, Rose (Davies 82), Sissoko, Wanyama (Llorente 46), Eriksen, Alli, Son, Lucas Moura.

EUROPA LEAGUE

Semi-finals

1st legs - May 2; 2nd legs - May 9

Arsenal (Eng) v Valencia (Spa)
3-1, 4-2 (agg 7-3)
Eintracht Frankfurt (Ger) v Chelsea (Eng)
1-1, 1-1 (aet) (agg 2-2, Chelsea 4-3 on pens)

FINAL TABLES: 2018-19

ALBANIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Partizani (C)	36	20	10	6	45	22	70
Kukesi	36	17	8	11	42	29	59
Teuta	36	15	12	9	43	36	57
Skenderbeu	36	17	4	15	45	30	55
Flamurtari	36	15	9	12	35	32	54
Laci	36	12	13	11	33	30	49
KF Tirana	36	12	11	13	44	35	47
Luftetari	36	13	8	15	37	39	47
Kastrioti (R)	36	12	6	18	35	53	42
Kamza[1] (R)	36	4	5	27	13	66	17

[1]Expelled from division after club officials and fans attacked the referee for awarding a penalty against Kamza during home game against Laci on Mar 3; subsequent games awarded as 3-0 wins to their scheduled opponents

ANDORRA

Division split after 21-round regular season; teams carried forward full regular-season record

CHAMP GRP	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
FC S Coloma (C)	27	15	9	3	41	18	54
Sant Julia	27	15	8	4	52	26	53
Inter Club	27	15	6	6	39	27	51
Engordany	27	8	9	10	30	34	33
RELEG GRP	**P**	**W**	**D**	**L**	**F**	**A**	**Pts**
Ordino	27	10	3	14	34	39	33
UE S Coloma	27	8	8	11	33	32	32
Lusitans (R)[1]	27	5	6	16	22	46	21
Encamp (R)	27	5	5	17	24	53	20

[1]Relegated after losing rel/prom play-off

ARMENIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ararat-Arm (C)	32	18	7	7	53	28	61
Pyunik	32	18	6	8	46	32	60
Banants	32	14	10	8	43	35	52
Alashkert	32	15	6	11	37	27	51
Lori	32	11	11	10	42	40	44
Gandzasar	32	10	8	14	38	33	38
Shirak	32	7	15	10	26	30	36
Artsakh	32	6	10	16	25	49	28
Ararat Yer (R)	32	5	7	20	24	60	22

AUSTRIA

Division split after 22-round regular season; teams carried forward only half their points (rounded down) but the rest of their regular-season record in full

CHAMP GRP	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Salzburg (C)	32	25	5	2	79	27	52
LASK	32	18	9	5	59	31	40
Wolfsberger	32	12	10	10	47	47	31
Austria V	32	12	6	14	45	48	27
Sturm	32	10	10	12	37	40	24
St Polten	32	9	9	14	32	50	21
RELEG GRP	**P**	**W**	**D**	**L**	**F**	**A**	**Pts**
Rapid	32	13	7	12	48	44	32
Mattersburg	32	12	7	13	41	48	28
Altach	32	9	10	13	48	44	28
Admira	32	8	9	15	42	62	22
Hartberg	32	10	5	17	48	66	22
Wacker (R)	32	8	5	19	32	51	20

AZERBAIJAN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Qarabag (C)	28	20	6	2	65	21	66
Neftchi	28	17	7	4	52	26	58
Sabail	28	12	5	11	34	37	41
Qabala	28	9	9	10	31	33	36
Zira	28	8	7	13	30	40	31
Sumqayit	28	8	5	15	24	42	29
Sabah	28	7	6	15	20	41	27
Keshla (R)	28	6	5	17	29	45	23

BELGIUM

REGULAR	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Genk (Q)	30	18	9	3	63	31	63
Club Brugge (Q)	30	16	8	6	64	32	56
Standard (Q)	30	15	8	7	49	35	53
Anderlecht (Q)	30	15	6	9	49	34	51
Gent (Q)	30	15	5	10	53	45	50
Antwerp (Q)	30	14	7	9	39	34	49
St Truiden	30	12	11	7	47	36	47
Kortrijk	30	12	7	11	44	42	43
Charleroi	30	12	6	12	43	43	42
Mouscron	30	11	7	12	33	33	40
Z Waregem	30	8	9	13	49	60	33
Eupen	30	10	2	18	34	57	32
Cercle Brugge	30	7	7	16	35	59	28
Oostende	30	6	9	15	29	52	27
Waasland-Bev	30	5	12	13	37	50	27
Lokeren (R)	30	5	5	20	28	53	20

The top 6 formed the championship group, carrying forward half their regular-season points (rounded up) only

CHAMP GRP	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Genk (C)	10	6	2	2	19	8	52
Club Brugge	10	7	1	2	19	11	50
Standard	10	4	1	5	17	16	40
Antwerp	10	4	2	4	12	16	39
Gent	10	3	1	6	10	15	35
Anderlecht	10	1	3	6	8	19	32

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sarajevo (C)	33	21	7	5	68	20	70
Zrinjski	33	19	8	6	46	22	65
Siroki Brijeg	33	13	15	5	37	23	54
Zeljeznicar S	33	14	8	11	43	32	50
Radnik	33	10	14	9	29	26	44
Mladost DK	33	12	7	14	36	45	43
Celik	33	11	10	12	30	49	43
Sloboda T	33	10	8	15	22	31	38
Zvijezda 09	33	9	11	13	33	45	38
Tuzla City	33	9	9	15	32	44	36
Krupa (R)	33	8	9	16	40	48	33
GOSK (R)	33	5	8	20	23	54	23

BULGARIA

Division split after 26-round regular season; teams carried forward full regular-season record

CHAMP GRP	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ludogorets (C)	36	23	10	3	67	19	79
CSKA	36	24	6	6	57	17	78
Levski	36	20	6	10	64	37	66
Beroe	36	16	10	10	42	30	58
Cherno More	36	15	7	14	44	51	52
Botev Plovdiv	36	14	8	14	44	36	50
RELEG GRP A	**P**	**W**	**D**	**L**	**F**	**A**	**Pts**
Etar	32	15	6	11	39	31	51
Botev Vratsa	32	13	6	13	49	44	45
Vitosha[1]	32	10	4	18	26	49	34
Vereya (R)[3]	32	0	6	26	13	81	6
RELEG GRP B	**P**	**W**	**D**	**L**	**F**	**A**	**Pts**
Slavia	32	10	9	13	37	42	39
Lokomotiv P	32	10	8	14	37	37	38
Septemvri (R)[2]	32	9	6	17	32	58	33
Dunav[1]	32	7	8	17	36	55	29

Bottom 2 in rel groups went into a further series of rel & rel/prom play-offs [1]Stay in top division after winning further play-offs [2]Relegated after losing further play-offs [3]Barred from competing in further play-offs – and relegated directly – for match-fixing; games awarded as 3-0 wins to scheduled opponents

CROATIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dinamo (C)	36	29	5	2	74	20	92
Rijeka	36	19	10	7	70	36	67
Osijek	36	18	8	10	61	36	62
Hajduk	36	17	11	8	59	39	62
Gorica	36	17	8	11	57	46	59
Lokomotiva	36	13	10	13	51	43	49
Slaven	36	7	16	13	41	53	37
Inter	36	9	4	23	40	84	31
Istra 1961[1]	36	6	7	23	31	73	25
Rudes (R)	36	3	5	28	26	80	14

[1]Stay in top division after winning rel/prom play-off

CYPRUS

Division split after 22-round regular season; teams carried forward full regular-season record

CHAMP GRP	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
APOEL (C)	32	21	7	4	66	25	70
AEK	32	18	8	6	51	23	62
Apollon	32	17	7	8	64	32	58
AEL	32	17	4	11	49	47	55
Nea Salamina	32	12	8	12	41	47	44
Omonia N	32	10	6	16	36	45	36
RELEG GRP	**P**	**W**	**D**	**L**	**F**	**A**	**Pts**
Anorthosis[1]	32	12	11	9	42	41	41
Pafos[1]	32	12	8	12	39	50	38
Doxa	32	9	8	15	47	50	35
ENP	32	9	8	15	35	51	35
Alki (R)	32	10	5	17	35	58	35
Ermis (R)	32	3	4	25	29	65	13

[1]6pts deducted for fielding an unregistered player

CZECH REPUBLIC

Division split after 30-round regular season; teams carried forward full regular-season record

CHAMP GRP	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Slavia (C)	35	26	5	4	79	26	83
Plzen	35	24	6	5	57	32	78
Sparta	35	20	6	9	59	33	66
Jablonec	35	17	6	12	58	32	57
Ostrava	35	13	8	14	39	43	47
Liberec	35	12	10	13	34	32	46

● *7-10th in regular season (Mlada Boleslav, Olomouc, Zlin & Teplice) went into Europa League play-offs*

RELEG GRP	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Slovacko	35	13	6	16	43	47	45
Opava	35	12	7	16	47	57	43
Boh'ians 1905	35	9	13	13	33	43	40
Pribram[1]	35	11	7	17	43	73	40
Karvina[1]	35	9	5	21	42	58	32
Dukla (R)	35	5	7	23	30	72	22

[1]Stay in top division after winning rel/prom play-off

DENMARK

Division split after 26-round regular season; teams carried forward full regular-season record

CHAMP GRP	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Copenhagen (C)	36	26	4	6	86	37	82
Midtjylland	36	21	8	7	76	43	71
Esbjerg	36	16	8	12	45	47	56
Brondby	36	15	7	14	60	52	52
OB	36	14	10	12	48	48	52
Nordsjaelland	36	10	14	12	52	54	44
RELEG GRP 1	**P**	**W**	**D**	**L**	**F**	**A**	**Pts**
AGF	32	12	11	9	46	40	47
SonderjyskE	32	9	8	15	37	45	35
Horsens[1]	32	8	9	15	32	55	33
Vejle (R)[2]	32	6	10	16	34	53	28
RELEG GRP 2	**P**	**W**	**D**	**L**	**F**	**A**	**Pts**
Randers	32	12	9	11	35	39	45
AaB	32	10	12	10	44	41	42
Vendsyssel (R)[2]	32	6	11	15	32	49	29
Hobro[1]	32	6	9	17	31	55	27

Bottom 2 in rel groups went into a further series of rel & rel/prom play-offs
[1]Stay in top division after winning further play-off(s)
[2]Relegated after losing further play-off(s)

ENGLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Man City (C)	38	32	2	4	95	23	98
Liverpool	38	30	7	1	89	22	97
Chelsea	38	21	9	8	63	39	72
Tottenham	38	23	2	13	67	39	71
Arsenal	38	21	7	10	73	51	70
Man United	38	19	9	10	65	54	66
Wolv'hampton	38	16	9	13	47	46	57
Everton	38	15	9	14	54	46	54
Leicester	38	15	7	16	51	48	52
West Ham	38	15	7	16	52	55	52
Watford	38	14	8	16	52	59	50
Crystal Palace	38	14	7	17	51	53	49
Newcastle	38	12	9	17	42	48	45
Bournemouth	38	13	6	19	56	70	45
Burnley	38	11	7	20	45	68	40
Southampton	38	9	12	17	45	65	39
Brighton	38	9	9	20	35	60	36
Cardiff (R)	38	10	4	24	34	69	34
Fulham (R)	38	7	5	26	34	81	26
Hudd'sfield (R)	38	3	7	28	22	76	16

FRANCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
PSG (C)	38	29	4	5	105	35	91
Lille	38	22	9	7	68	33	75
Lyon	38	21	9	8	70	47	72
Saint-Etienne	38	19	9	10	59	41	66
Marseille	38	18	7	13	60	52	61
Montpellier	38	15	14	9	53	42	59
Nice	38	15	11	12	30	35	56
Reims	38	13	16	9	39	42	55
Nimes	38	15	8	15	57	58	53
Rennes	38	13	13	12	55	52	52
Strasbourg	38	11	16	11	58	48	49
Nantes	38	13	9	16	48	48	48
Angers	38	10	16	12	44	49	46
Bordeaux	38	10	11	17	34	42	41
Amiens	38	9	11	18	31	52	38
Toulouse	38	8	14	16	35	57	38
Monaco	38	8	12	18	38	57	36
Dijon[1]	38	9	7	22	31	60	34
Caen (R)	38	7	12	19	29	54	33
Guingamp (R)	38	5	12	21	28	68	27

[1]Stay in top division after winning rel/prom play-off

GERMANY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bayern M (C)	34	24	6	4	88	32	78
B Dortmund	34	23	7	4	81	44	76
RB Leipzig	34	19	9	6	63	29	66
B Leverkusen	34	18	4	12	69	52	58
M'gladbach	34	16	7	11	55	42	55
Wolfsburg	34	16	7	11	62	50	55
Eintracht F	34	15	9	10	60	48	54
Werder B	34	14	11	9	58	49	53
Hoffenheim	34	13	12	9	70	52	51
Fortuna D	34	13	5	16	49	65	44
Hertha Berlin	34	11	10	13	49	57	43
Mainz	34	12	7	15	46	57	43
Freiburg	34	8	12	14	46	61	36
Schalke	34	8	9	17	37	55	33
Augsburg	34	8	8	18	51	71	32
Stuttgart (R)[1]	34	7	7	20	32	70	28
Hanover (R)	34	5	6	23	31	71	21
Nuremberg (R)	34	3	10	21	26	68	19

[1]Relegated after losing rel/prom play-off

GIBRALTAR

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Lincoln RI (C)	27	21	3	3	84	19	66
Europa	27	20	4	3	84	20	64
St Joseph's	27	17	4	6	69	29	55
Mons Calpe	27	15	4	8	63	29	49
Gib Phoenix	27	13	4	10	42	34	43
Gibraltar Utd	27	11	6	10	48	37	39
Lynx	27	8	7	12	29	45	31
Glacis United	27	7	3	17	28	58	24
Lions Gib'tar[1]	27	3	0	24	17	77	9
Boca Jnrs (R)	27	2	1	24	13	129	7

[1]Enter rel/prom play-off

HOLLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ajax (C)	34	28	2	4	119	32	86
PSV	34	26	5	3	98	26	83
Feyenoord	34	20	5	9	75	41	65
AZ	34	17	7	10	64	43	58
Vitesse	34	14	11	9	70	51	53
Utrecht	34	15	8	11	60	51	53
Heracles	34	15	3	16	61	68	48
Groningen	34	13	6	15	39	41	45
Den Haag	34	12	9	13	58	63	45
Willem II	34	13	5	16	58	72	44
Heerenveen	34	10	11	13	64	73	41
VVV	34	11	8	15	47	63	41
Zwolle	34	11	6	17	44	57	39
Emmen	34	10	8	16	41	72	38
Fortuna	34	9	7	18	50	80	34
Excelsior (R)[1]	34	9	6	19	46	79	33
Graafschap (R)[1]	34	8	5	21	38	75	29
NAC (R)	34	5	8	21	29	74	23

[1]Relegated after losing in the rel/prom play-offs

HUNGARY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ferencvaros (C)	33	23	5	5	72	27	74
Vidi	33	18	7	8	53	37	61
Debrecen	33	14	9	10	44	39	51
Honved	33	13	10	10	46	38	49
Ujpest	33	12	12	9	38	28	48
Mezokovesd	33	12	8	13	45	40	44
Puskas Akad	33	11	7	15	36	45	40
Paks	33	9	12	12	33	46	39
Kisvarda	33	10	8	15	36	48	38
Diosgyor	33	10	8	15	36	57	38
MTK (R)	33	10	4	19	42	56	34
Haladas (R)	33	8	6	19	31	51	30

ISRAEL

Division split after 26-round regular season; teams carried forward full regular-season record

CHAMP GRP	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Mac Tel Aviv (C)	36	27	8	1	77	17	89
Maccabi Haifa	36	16	10	10	46	41	58
Beer Sheva	36	15	10	11	48	46	55
Netanya	36	15	8	13	45	47	53
Bnei Yehuda	36	14	9	13	56	41	51
Hadera	36	12	6	18	43	59	42
RELEG GRP	**P**	**W**	**D**	**L**	**F**	**A**	**Pts**
Beitar Jerus'm	33	11	10	12	43	43	43
Hap Tel Aviv	33	9	15	9	40	30	42
Ra'anana	33	8	15	10	29	38	39
Kiryat Shmona	33	9	11	13	34	35	38
Hapoel Haifa	33	8	13	12	44	47	37
Ashdod	33	10	7	16	34	54	37
M Petah T (R)	33	8	12	13	33	51	36
Bn Sakhnin (R)	33	5	12	16	27	50	27

ITALY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Juventus (C)	38	28	6	4	70	30	90
Napoli	38	24	7	7	74	36	79
Atalanta	38	20	9	9	77	46	69
Internazionale	38	20	9	9	57	33	69
Milan	38	19	11	8	55	36	68
Roma	38	18	12	8	66	48	66
Torino	38	16	15	7	52	37	63
Lazio	38	17	8	13	56	46	59
Sampdoria	38	15	8	15	60	51	53
Bologna	38	11	11	16	48	56	44
Sassuolo	38	9	16	13	53	60	43
Udinese	38	11	10	17	39	53	43
SPAL	38	11	9	18	44	56	42
Parma	38	10	11	17	41	61	41
Cagliari	38	10	11	17	36	54	41
Fiorentina	38	8	17	13	47	45	41
Genoa	38	8	14	16	39	57	38
Empoli (R)	38	10	8	20	51	70	38
Frosinone (R)	38	5	10	23	29	69	25
Chievo[1] (R)	38	2	14	22	25	75	17

[1]3pts deducted for false accounting

KOSOVO

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Feronikeli (C)	33	25	5	3	64	14	80
Prishtina	33	23	6	4	49	12	75
Llapi	33	22	3	8	54	24	69
Drita	33	14	6	13	47	39	48
Ferizaj	33	14	4	15	39	41	46
Flamurtari	33	12	9	12	33	39	45
Drenica	33	11	10	12	41	34	43
Ballkani	33	12	7	14	35	36	43
Trepca '89[1]	33	11	9	13	40	45	42
Gjilani[1]	33	10	8	15	28	37	38
Liria (R)	33	8	4	21	31	60	28
KEK-u (R)	33	0	1	32	24	104	1

[1]Stay in top division after winning rel/prom play-off

LUXEMBOURG

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
F91 (C)	26	18	5	3	72	33	59
Fola	26	15	5	6	65	28	50
Jeunesse E	26	14	6	6	46	30	48
Progres	26	13	5	8	45	35	44
Differdange	26	13	5	8	35	33	44
Racing	26	11	6	9	42	31	39
Strassen	26	12	3	11	46	43	39
Petange	26	11	4	11	38	43	37
Mondorf	26	10	5	11	39	39	35
Etzella	26	7	7	12	31	44	28
Victoria	26	7	7	12	33	49	28
Hostert[1]	26	7	4	15	37	58	25
Hamm B'ca (R)	26	5	4	17	29	50	19
Rumelange (R)	26	4	4	18	34	76	16

[1]Stay in top division after winning rel/prom play-off

MONTENEGRO

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sutjeska (C)	36	21	11	4	58	21	74
Buducnost	36	17	14	5	56	25	65
Zeta	36	16	13	7	36	21	61
OFK Titograd	36	16	9	11	47	41	57
Iskra	36	13	11	12	46	39	50
Grbalj	36	11	15	10	45	36	48
Petrovac	36	13	8	15	40	45	47
Rudar[1]	36	8	17	11	35	44	41
Lovcen[2]	36	5	11	20	29	65	26
Mornar (R)	36	1	9	26	17	72	12

[1]Stay in top division after winning rel/prom play-off
[2]Enter rel/prom play-off

NORTH MACEDONIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Shkendija (C)	36	24	7	5	80	29	79
Vardar S	36	17	13	6	45	23	64
Akad Pandev	36	17	7	12	45	35	58
Shkupi	36	13	9	14	40	42	48
Renova	36	12	11	13	53	49	47
Makedonija	36	12	11	13	45	50	47
Rabotnicki	36	13	7	16	43	49	46
Sileks[1]	36	11	11	14	27	39	44
Belasica (R)	36	9	11	16	37	49	38
Pobeda P (R)	36	6	5	25	26	76	23

[1]Stay in top division after winning rel/prom play-off

POLAND

Division split after 30-round regular season; teams carried forward full regular-season record

CHAMP GRP	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Piast (C)	37	21	9	7	57	33	72
Legia	37	20	8	9	55	38	68
Lechia	37	19	10	8	54	38	67
Cracovia	37	17	6	14	45	43	57
Jagiellonia	37	16	9	12	55	52	57
Zaglebie Lubin	37	15	8	14	57	48	53
Pogon Szcz'in	37	14	10	13	57	54	52
Lech	37	15	7	15	49	48	52
RELEG GRP	**P**	**W**	**D**	**L**	**F**	**A**	**Pts**
Wisla Krakow	37	14	7	16	67	63	49
Korona	37	12	11	14	42	54	47
Gornik Zabrze	37	12	10	15	48	53	46
Slask	37	12	8	17	49	45	44
Arka	37	10	12	15	49	51	42
Wisla Plock	37	10	11	16	50	58	41
Miedz (R)	37	10	10	17	40	65	40
Zaglebie S'c (R)	37	7	8	22	49	80	29

PORTUGAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Benfica (C)	34	28	3	3	103	31	87
Porto	34	27	4	3	74	20	85
Sporting L	34	23	5	6	72	33	74
Braga	34	21	4	9	56	37	67
Vit Guimaraes	34	15	7	12	46	34	52
Moreirense	34	16	4	14	39	44	52
Rio Ave	34	12	9	13	50	52	45
Boavista	34	13	5	16	34	40	44
Belen'ses SAD	34	10	13	11	42	51	43
Santa Clara	34	11	9	14	43	45	42
Maritimo	34	12	3	19	26	44	39
Portimonense	34	11	6	17	44	59	39
Vit Setubal	34	8	12	14	28	39	36
Aves	34	10	6	18	35	49	36
Tondela	34	9	8	17	40	54	35
Chaves (R)	34	8	8	18	34	57	32
Nacional (R)	34	7	7	20	33	73	28
Feirense (R)	34	3	11	20	27	64	20

ROMANIA

Division split after 26-round regular season; teams carried forward half their points (rounded up) only

CHAMP GRP	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
CFR (C)	10	7	2	1	15	4	50
FCSB	10	7	2	1	18	6	48
Viitorul	10	6	2	2	18	10	39
Univ Craiova	10	4	1	5	8	10	36
Astra	10	2	0	8	6	20	27
Sepsi	10	0	1	9	5	20	20
RELEG GRP	**P**	**W**	**D**	**L**	**F**	**A**	**Pts**
Gaz Metan	14	10	2	2	25	9	48
Botosani	14	8	2	4	18	9	44
Dinamo	14	8	3	3	16	7	43
CSM Poli Iasi	14	3	5	6	12	18	31
Voluntari	14	5	5	4	14	16	31
Hermannstadt[1]	14	2	5	7	9	19	27
Dunarea (R)	14	3	4	7	8	18	25
Concordia (R)	14	2	4	8	17	23	19

[1]Enter rel/prom play-off

RUSSIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Zenit (C)	30	20	4	6	57	29	64
Lokomotiv	30	16	8	6	45	28	56
Krasnodar	30	16	8	6	55	23	56
CSKA	30	14	9	7	46	23	51
Spartak M	30	14	7	9	36	31	49
Arsenal	30	12	10	8	40	33	46
Orenburg	30	12	7	11	39	34	43
Akhmat	30	11	9	10	28	30	42
Rostov	30	10	11	9	25	23	41
Ural	30	10	8	12	33	45	38
Rubin	30	7	15	8	24	30	36
Dynamo	30	6	15	9	28	28	33
Krylya So'tov[1]	30	8	4	18	25	46	28
Ufa[1]	30	5	11	14	24	34	26
Anzhi (R)	30	5	6	19	13	50	21
Yenisey (R)	30	4	8	18	24	55	20

[1]Stay in top division after winning rel/prom play-off

SAN MARINO

2018-19 Championship Final

May 25: La Fiorita 1 Tre Penne 3 (aet).

SCOTLAND

Division split after 33-round regular season; teams carried forward full regular-season record

CHAMP GRP	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Celtic (C)	38	27	6	5	77	20	87
Rangers	38	23	9	6	82	27	78
Kilmarnock	38	19	10	9	50	31	67
Aberdeen	38	20	7	11	57	44	67
Hibernian	38	14	12	12	51	39	54
Hearts	38	15	6	17	42	50	51
RELEG GRP	**P**	**W**	**D**	**L**	**F**	**A**	**Pts**
St Johnstone	38	15	7	16	38	48	52
Motherwell	38	15	6	17	46	56	51
Livingston	38	11	11	16	42	44	44
Hamilton	38	9	6	23	28	75	33
St Mirren[1]	38	8	8	22	34	66	32
Dundee (R)	38	5	6	27	31	78	21

[1]Stay in top division after winning rel/prom play-off

SERBIA

Division split after 30-round regular season; teams carried forward only half their points (rounded up) but the rest of their regular-season record in full

CHAMP GRP	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Red Star (C)	37	33	3	1	97	20	60
Radnicki Nis	37	25	10	2	71	30	48
Partizan	37	20	9	8	58	28	42
Cukaricki	37	18	12	7	63	36	39
Mladost	37	16	9	12	49	37	34
Napredak	37	12	12	13	46	50	28
Vojvodina	37	10	11	16	27	43	22
Proleter	37	10	11	16	34	41	22
RELEG GRP	**P**	**W**	**D**	**L**	**F**	**A**	**Pts**
Radnik	37	13	8	16	38	45	28
Spartak	37	12	10	15	41	49	27
Vozdovac	37	12	7	18	36	48	25
Macva	37	10	11	16	24	38	25
Rad	37	7	12	18	22	44	23
Dinamo (R)[1]	37	9	6	22	24	67	23
Zemun (R)	37	6	12	19	36	53	21
Backa (R)	37	7	9	21	31	68	18

[1]Relegated after losing rel/prom play-off

SLOVAKIA

Division split after 22-round regular season; teams carried forward full regular-season record

CHAMP GRP	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Slovan (C)	32	25	5	2	84	33	80
Dun'ka Streda	32	19	6	7	63	37	63
Ruzomberok	32	15	11	6	50	31	56
Zilina	32	16	6	10	56	44	54
Michalovce	32	11	7	14	39	58	40
Sered	32	11	5	16	39	54	38
RELEG GRP	**P**	**W**	**D**	**L**	**F**	**A**	**Pts**
Spartak Tr'va	32	10	8	14	35	35	38
Senica	32	10	7	15	42	53	37
Nitra	32	8	10	14	42	48	34
Zlate Moravce	32	10	4	18	33	55	34
Trencin[1]	32	8	7	17	41	56	31
Podbrezova (R)	32	7	8	17	28	48	29

[1]Stay in top division after winning rel/prom play-off

SLOVENIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Maribor (C)	36	23	9	4	82	34	78
Olimpija	36	20	9	7	73	47	69
Domzale	36	18	9	9	76	47	63
Mura	36	13	13	10	53	37	52
Celje	36	12	13	11	45	51	49
Aluminij	36	14	6	16	50	53	48
Rudar	36	12	7	17	50	73	43
Triglav	36	10	7	19	51	83	37
Gorica (R)[1]	36	7	10	19	44	63	31
Krsko (R)	36	5	9	22	29	65	24

[1]Relegated after losing rel/prom play-off

SPAIN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Barcelona (C)	38	26	9	3	90	36	87
Atl Madrid	38	22	10	6	55	29	76
Real Madrid	38	21	5	12	63	46	68
Valencia	38	15	16	7	51	35	61
Getafe	38	15	14	9	48	35	59
Sevilla	38	17	8	13	62	47	59
Espanyol	38	14	11	13	48	50	53
Ath Bilbao	38	13	14	11	41	45	53
R Sociedad	38	13	11	14	45	46	50
Betis	38	14	8	16	44	52	50
Alaves	38	13	11	14	39	50	50
Eibar	38	11	14	13	46	50	47
Leganes	38	11	12	15	37	43	45
Villarreal	38	10	14	14	49	52	44
Levante	38	11	11	16	59	66	44
Valladolid	38	10	11	17	32	51	41
Celta Vigo	38	10	11	17	53	62	41
Girona (R)	38	9	10	19	37	53	37
Huesca (R)	38	7	12	19	43	65	33
Rayo V'cano (R)	38	8	8	22	41	70	32

SWITZERLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Young Boys (C)	36	29	4	3	99	36	91
Basle	36	20	11	5	71	46	71
Lugano	36	10	16	10	50	49	46
Thun	36	12	10	14	57	58	46
Lucerne	36	14	4	18	56	61	46
St Gallen	36	13	7	16	49	58	46
Zurich	36	11	11	14	43	52	44
Sion	36	12	7	17	50	55	43
Xamax[1]	36	9	10	17	44	65	37
Grasshop'r (R)	36	5	10	21	32	71	25

[1]Stay in top division after winning rel/prom play-off

Final tables: 2018-19 continued...

TURKEY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Galatasaray (C)	34	20	9	5	72	36	69
Basaksehir	34	19	10	5	49	22	67
Besiktas	34	19	8	7	72	46	65
Trabzonspor	34	18	9	7	64	46	63
Malatyaspor	34	13	8	13	47	46	47
Fenerbahce	34	11	13	10	44	44	46
Antalyaspor	34	13	6	15	39	55	45
Konyaspor	34	9	17	8	40	38	44
Alanyaspor	34	12	8	14	37	43	44
Kayserispor	34	10	11	13	35	50	41
Rizespor	34	9	14	11	48	50	41
Sivasspor	34	10	11	13	49	54	41
Ankaragucu	34	11	7	16	38	53	40
Kasimpasa	34	11	6	17	53	62	39
Goztepe	34	11	5	18	37	42	38
Bursaspor (R)	34	7	16	11	28	37	37
Erzurums'r (R)	34	8	11	15	36	43	35
Akhisar (R)	34	6	9	19	33	54	27

UKRAINE

Division split after 22-round regular season; teams carried forward full regular-season record

CHAMP GRP	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Shakhtar (C)	32	26	5	1	73	11	83
Dynamo	32	22	6	4	54	18	72
Oleksandria	32	14	7	11	39	34	49
Mariupol	32	12	7	13	36	47	43
Zorya	32	11	10	11	39	34	43
FC Lviv	32	8	10	14	25	40	34
RELEG GRP	**P**	**W**	**D**	**L**	**F**	**A**	**Pts**
Vorskla	32	12	6	14	31	43	42
Desna	32	12	5	15	35	41	41
Olimpik	32	7	13	12	41	48	34
Karpaty[1]	32	8	9	15	44	53	33
Chorn'ts (R)[2]	32	8	7	17	31	49	31
Arsenal (R)	32	7	5	20	26	56	26

[1]Stay in top division after winning rel/prom play-off
[2]Relegated after losing rel/prom play-off

SOUTH AMERICA

RECOPA

(Libertadores Cup holders, River Plate v Sudamericana Cup holders, Athletico Paranaense)

1st leg

May 22
Athletico Paranaense (Bra) 1 (Ruben 25)
River Plate (Arg) 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Roldan (Col)
Athletico Paranaense: Santos - Jonathan (Madson 65), Paulo Andre, Leo Pereira, Renan Lodi, Wellington (Thonny Anderson 86), Bruno Guimaraes, Nikao, Gonzalez (Leo Cittadini 75), Rony, Ruben.
River Plate: Armani - Mayada (Angileri 61), Pinola, Martinez Quarta, Casco, De La Cruz, Perez, Palacios (Zuculini 71), Fernandez, Suarez (Borre 75), Pratto. *Sent off: Casco 81.*

2nd leg

May 30
River Plate 3 (Fernandez 65, Pratto 90+1, Suarez 90+5)
Athletico Paranaense 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Tobar (Chl)
River Plate 3-1 on agg
River Plate: Armani - Montiel, Martinez Quarta, Pinola, Angileri (Mayada 86), Perez, Ponzio, Palacios (De La Cruz 46), Fernandez, Borre (Suarez 71), Pratto.
Athletico Paranaense: Santos - Jonathan (Romero 90+3), Paulo Andre, Leo Pereira, Renan Lodi, Nikao (Marcelo Cirino 78), Wellington, Bruno Guimaraes, Rony, Gonzalez (Leo Cittadini 87), Ruben.

LIBERTADORES CUP

Group A

Mar 6
Alianza Lima (Per) 1 (Manzaneda 31)
River Plate (Arg) 1 (Ferreira 90+6)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Roldan (Col)

Palestino (Chl) 0
Internacional (Bra) 1 (Rafael Sobis 83)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Diaz de Vivar (Par)

Mar13
Internacional 2 (Lopez 8, 19)
Alianza Lima 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Valenzuela (Ven)

River Plate 0
Palestino 0
Ref: Herrera (Ven)

Apr 2
Palestino 3 (Duclos og 36, Passerini 64, Ahumada 77)
Alianza Lima 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Aquino (Par)
Sent off: Ramirez (Alianza Lima) 49

Apr 3
Internacional 2 (Lopez 18, Edenilson 31)
River Plate 2 (Pratto pen 42, De La Cruz 61)
HT: 2-1. **Ref:** Ostojich (Uru)

Apr 9
Internacional 3 (Patrick 11, Guerrero 22, 66)
Palestino 2 (Fernandez 41, Passerini 47)
HT: 2-1. **Ref:** Orbe (Ecu)
Sent off: Guilherme Parede (Internacional) 81

Apr11
River Plate 3 (Suarez 15, Martinez Quarta 54, De La Cruz 90+3)
Alianza Lima 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Diaz de Vivar (Par)

Apr 24
Alianza Lima 0
Internacional 1 (Rodrigo Moledo 80)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Orosco (Bol)

Palestino 0
River Plate 2 (Pinola 31, Fernandez 63)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Rojas (Col)
Sent off: Fernandez (Palestino) 73; Borre (River Plate) 88

May 7
Alianza Lima 1 (I Gonzalez og 18)
Palestino 2 (Tarifeno 37, 54)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Guerrero (Ecu)

River Plate 2 (Alvarez 35, Pratto 90+3)
Internacional 2 (Rafael Sobis 44, pen 59)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Maza (Chl)

LIBERTADORES CUP – GROUP A – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Internac'nal (Q)	6	4	2	0	11	6	14
River Plate (Q)	6	2	4	0	10	5	10
Palestino (SC)	6	2	1	3	7	7	7
Alianza Lima	6	0	1	5	2	12	1

Group B

Mar 7
Huracan (Arg) 0
Cruzeiro (Bra) 1 (Rodriguinho 30)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Haro (Per)

Mar 8
Deportivo Lara (Ven) 0
Emelec (Ecu) 0
Ref: Vargas (Bol)

Mar14
Emelec 0
Huracan 0
Ref: Aquino (Par)

Mar 27
Cruzeiro 2 (Rodriguinho 7, Jadson 90+5)
Deportivo Lara 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Maza (Chl)

Apr 3
Deportivo Lara 2 (Manzano pen 9, Centeno 44)
Huracan 1 (Manzano og 63)
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Gonzalez (Uru)
Sent off: Manzano (Deportivo Lara) 68; Mendoza (Huracan) 90+4

Emelec 0
Cruzeiro 1 (Rodriguinho 32)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Carrillo (Per)
Sent off: Luna (Emelec) 90+2

Apr10
Cruzeiro 4 (Fred 19, 23, 32, Dodo 83)
Huracan 0
HT: 3-0. **Ref:** Bascunan (Chl)

Apr11
Emelec 2 (B Angulo 67, 74)
Deportivo Lara 2 (Frutos pen 51, F Vargas 89)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Ostojich (Uru)

Apr 23
Deportivo Lara 0
Cruzeiro 2 (Fred 31, Sassa pen 78)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Vargas (Bol)

Huracan 1 (Gamba 90+5)
Emelec 2 (Jaime 34, B Angulo 72)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Samaniego (Par)

May 8
Cruzeiro 1 (Sassa 67)
Emelec 2 (Fabio og 41, B Angulo pen 90)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Rojas (Col)

Huracan 3 (Gamba 24, Chavez 28, 65)
Deportivo Lara 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Carrillo (Per)

LIBERTADORES CUP – GROUP B – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cruzeiro (Q)	6	5	0	1	11	2	15
Emelec (Q)	6	2	3	1	6	5	9
Dep Lara (SC)	6	1	2	3	4	10	5
Huracan	6	1	1	4	5	9	4

Group C

Mar 5
Godoy Cruz (Arg) 0
Olimpia (Par) 0
Ref: Claus (Bra)

Mar 6
Universidad Concepcion (Chl) 5 (Rubio 45+2, 51, 81, 90+3, Orellana 72)
Sporting Cristal (Per) 4 (Gonzales 55, Palacios 59, 87, Herrera 85)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Gallo (Col)

Mar12
Olimpia 1 (Viudez 16)
Universidad Concepcion 1 (Orellana 28)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Sampaio (Bra)

Sporting Cristal 1 (Herrera 3)
Godoy Cruz 1 (Cardona 15)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Daronco (Bra)

Apr 3
Universidad Concepcion 0
Godoy Cruz 0
Ref: Machado (Bra)
Sent off: Pacheco (Universidad Concepcion) 32

Apr 4
Sporting Cristal 0
Olimpia 3 (Santa Cruz 53, Mendieta 55, Rojas 80)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Rojas (Col)

Apr 9
Olimpia 2 (Camacho 19, 45+4)
Godoy Cruz 1 (Garcia 90+3)
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Daronco (Bra)
Sent off: Gonzalez (Godoy Cruz) 82

Apr10
Sporting Cristal 2 (Palacios 31, Merlo 34)
Universidad Concepcion 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Gonzalez (Uru)
Sent off: Mencia (Universidad Concepcion) 44

Apr 23
Godoy Cruz 2 (Viera pen 45+2, Lucero 48)
Sporting Cristal 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Valenzuela (Ven)

Universidad Concepcion 3 (Cordero pen 9, Rubio 40, Ballon 74)
Olimpia 3 (Santa Cruz 55, Camacho 64, Ortiz 90+2)
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Roldan (Col)
Sent off: Silva (Olimpia) 82

May 9
Godoy Cruz 1 (Gonzalez 24)
Universidad Concepcion 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Sampaio (Bra)
Sent off: Henriquez (Godoy Cruz) 90+5; Rubio (Universidad Concepcion) 90+5

Olimpia 0
Sporting Cristal 1 (Palacios 45)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Claus (Bra)

LIBERTADORES CUP – GROUP C – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Olimpia (Q)	6	2	3	1	9	6	9
Godoy Cruz (Q)	6	2	3	1	5	3	9
Sp Cristal (SC)	6	2	1	3	8	11	7
U Concepcion	6	1	3	2	9	11	6

Group D

Mar 5
San Jose (Bol) 0
Flamengo (Bra) 1 (Gabriel Barbosa 60)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Pitana (Arg)

Mar 7
LDU Quito (Ecu) 2 (Freire 25, Aguirre 82)
Penarol (Uru) 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Rapallini (Arg)

Mar13
Flamengo 3 (Everton Ribeiro 9, Gabriel Barbosa 69, Uribe 81)
LDU Quito 1 (Martinez Borja pen 90+2)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Delfino (Arg)

Mar14
Penarol 4 (Viatri 2, 49, Lema 23, Canobbio 37)
San Jose 0
HT: 3-0. **Ref:** Argote (Ven)

Apr 2
San Jose 3 (Saucedo 30, Cruz og 71, Ramallo 77)
LDU Quito 3 (Anangono 25, Mena og 40, og 69)
HT: 1-2. **Ref:** Samaniego (Par)

Apr 3
Flamengo 0
Penarol 1 (Viatri 88)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Loustau (Arg)
Sent off: Gabriel Barbosa (Flamengo) 75

Apr 9
Penarol 1 (C Rodriguez 70)
LDU Quito 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Herrera (Ven)

Apr11
Flamengo 6 (Diego 3, Everton Ribeiro 31, 80, De Arrascaeta 57, Vitinho pen 84, Gutierrez og 88)
San Jose 1 (Saucedo 19)
HT: 2-1. **Ref:** Maza (Chl)
Sent off: Toco (San Jose) 5

Apr 24
LDU Quito 2 (Anangono 45+3, Chicaiza 73)
Flamengo 1 (Bruno Henrique 19)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Pitana (Arg)

San Jose 3 (Mena 56, Saucedo pen 73, Sanguinetti 88)
Penarol 1 (Mena og 83)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Delfino (Arg)

May 8
LDU Quito 4 (Martinez Borja 65, A Julio 68, 74, 88)
San Jose 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Argote (Ven)

Penarol 0
Flamengo 0
Ref: Tobar (Chl)
Sent off: Para (Flamengo) 64; Gonzalez (Penarol) 90+5

LIBERTADORES CUP – GROUP D – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Flamengo (Q)	6	3	1	2	11	5	10
LDU Quito (Q)	6	3	1	2	12	8	10
Penarol (SC)	6	3	1	2	7	5	10
San Jose	6	1	1	4	7	19	4

Group E

Mar 6
Atletico Mineiro (Bra) 0
Cerro Porteno (Par) 1 (Churin 78)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Vigliano (Arg)

Zamora (Ven) 0
Nacional (Uru) 1 (Bergessio 24)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Carrillo (Per)

Mar12
Nacional 1 (Bergessio 72)
Atletico Mineiro 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Tobar (Chl)

Mar13
Cerro Porteno 2 (Haedo Valdez 20, 49)
Zamora 1 (Paiva 53)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Tello (Arg)

Apr 2
Cerro Porteno 1 (V Caceres 27)
Nacional 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Pitana (Arg)

Apr 3
Atletico Mineiro 3 (Maicon 51, Vinicius Goes 72, Fabio Santos pen 80)
Zamora 2 (Gallardo 17, Paiva 45)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Vargas (Bol)
Sent off: Hernandez (Zamora) 75

Apr10
Cerro Porteno 4 (Acosta 31, F Carrizo 34, V Caceres 36, Larrivey 44)
Atletico Mineiro 1 (Ricardo Oliveira 19)
HT: 4-1. **Ref:** Roldan (Col)

Nacional 1 (Bergessio 51)
Zamora 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Espinoza (Arg)

Apr 23
Atletico Mineiro 0
Nacional 1 (Carballo 87)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Rapallini (Arg)

Apr 25
Zamora 2 (I Gonzalez pen 45+1, Ramirez 51)
Cerro Porteno 1 (Haedo Valdez 58)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Guerrero (Ecu)
Sent off: Candia (Cerro Porteno) 45

May 7
Nacional 1 (Amaral 59)
Cerro Porteno 1 (Arzamendia 45+2)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Herrera (Ven)

Zamora 1 (I Gonzalez pen 59)
Atletico Mineiro 2 (Alerrandro 25, 36)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Herrera (Col)

LIBERTADORES CUP – GROUP E – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
C Porteno (Q)	6	4	1	1	10	5	13
Nacional (Q)	6	4	1	1	5	2	13
At Mineiro (SC)	6	2	0	4	6	10	6
Zamora	6	1	0	5	6	10	3

Group F

Mar 5
Melgar (Per) 0
San Lorenzo (Arg) 0
Ref: Herrera (Ven)

Mar 6
Junior (Col) 0
Palmeiras (Bra) 2 (Gustavo Scarpa 11, Marcos Rocha 90+2)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Fedorczuk (Uru)
Sent off: T Gutierrez (Junior) 76

Mar12
Palmeiras 3 (Felipe Melo 25, Ricardo Goulart 54, Deyverson 71)
Melgar 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Diaz de Vivar (Par)

Mar13
San Lorenzo 1 (Martinez 78)
Junior 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Samaniego (Par)
Sent off: Fuentes (Junior) 29

Apr 2
Melgar 1 (Carmona 72)
Junior 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Valenzuela (Ven)

San Lorenzo 1 (Herrera 51)
Palmeiras 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Bascunan (Chl)

Apr 9
San Lorenzo 2 (Rodriguez 45+2, Barrios 88)
Melgar 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Aquino (Par)
Sent off: Salazar (San Lorenzo) 54; Narvaez (Melgar) 60

Apr10
Palmeiras 3 (Deyverson 20, Dudu 55, Hyoran 89)
Junior 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Tobar (Chl)

Apr 25
Junior 1 (Rangel 13)
San Lorenzo 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Gonzalez (Uru)
Sent off: Renteria (San Lorenzo) 90+4

Melgar 0
Palmeiras 4 (Gomez 9, Gustavo Scarpa 22, 67, Moises 81)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Orbe (Ecu)
Sent off: Neyra (Melgar) 90+2

May 8
Junior 0
Melgar 1 (Cuesta 17)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Herrera (Arg)

Palmeiras 1 (Gustavo Scarpa 69)
San Lorenzo 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Vargas (Bol)

LIBERTADORES CUP – GROUP F – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Palmeiras (Q)	6	5	0	1	13	1	15
San Lorenzo (Q)	6	3	1	2	4	2	10
Melgar (SC)	6	2	1	3	2	9	7
Junior	6	1	0	5	1	8	3

Group G

Mar 5
Jorge Wilstermann (Bol) 0
Boca Juniors (Arg) 0
Ref: Bascunan (Chl)

Tolima (Col) 1 (Banguero 30)
Athletico Paranaense (Bra) 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Maza (Chl)

Mar12
Boca Juniors 3 (Perez og 48, Benedetto 56, Zarate 60)
Tolima 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Ostojich (Uru)
Sent off: Robles (Tolima) 90+1

Mar14
Athletico Paranaense 4 (Ruben 32, Andrade 36, Renan Lodi 50, Bruno Guimaraes 88)
Jorge Wilstermann 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Orbe (Ecu)

Apr 2
Athletico Paranaense 3 (Ruben 36, 69, 81)
Boca Juniors 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Tobar (Chl)

Apr 3
Tolima 2 (Perez 6, 60)
Jorge Wilstermann 2 (Pedriel 75, 80)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Herrera (Ven)
Sent off: Suarez (Jorge Wilstermann) 86

Apr 9
Athletico Paranaense 1 (Bruno Guimaraes 79)
Tolima 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Valenzuela (Ven)

Apr10
Boca Juniors 4 (Reynoso 36, Benedetto pen 63, Zarate 85, 90+5)
Jorge Wilstermann 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Haro (Per)

Apr 24
Jorge Wilstermann 3 (Pedriel 23, Ortiz pen 51, C Melgar pen 88)
Athletico Paranaense 2 (Renan Lodi 40, Ruben pen 57)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Diaz de Vivar (Par)

Tolima 2 (Castro 12, Perez 20)
Boca Juniors 2 (Zarate 35, Benedetto pen 44)
HT: 2-2. **Ref:** Carrillo (Per)

May 9
Boca Juniors 2 (Lopez 72, Tevez 90+5)
Athletico Paranaense 1 (Ruben 66)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Orbe (Ecu)
Sent off: Wellington (Athletico Paranaense) 80

Jorge Wilstermann 0
Tolima 2 (Perez 18, Castro 62)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Samaniego (Par)

LIBERTADORES CUP – GROUP G – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Boca Jnrs (Q)	6	3	2	1	11	6	11
A Para'nse (Q)	6	3	0	3	11	6	9
Tolima (SC)	6	2	2	2	7	8	8
J Wilstermann	6	1	2	3	5	14	5

Group H

Mar 5
Libertad (Par) 4 (Martinez 1, 4, Bareiro 74, Cougo 90+4)
Universidad Catolica (Chl) 1 (Aued pen 38)
HT: 2-1. **Ref:** Valenzuela (Ven)

Mar 6
Rosario Central (Arg) 1 (Zampedri 2)
Gremio (Bra) 1 (Everton 13)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Zambrano (Ecu)

Mar12
Gremio 0
Libertad 1 (Bareiro 45+3)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Haro (Per)

Mar13
Universidad Catolica 2 (Puch 28, Aued pen 90+6)
Rosario Central 1 (Vergara 90+2)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Carrillo (Per)

Apr 4
Libertad 2 (Espinoza 47, Recalde 69)
Rosario Central 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Orbe (Ecu)
Sent off: Ortiz (Rosario Central) 75

Universidad Catolica 1 (Saez 17)
Gremio 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Roldan (Col)

Apr10
Gremio 3 (Jean Pyerre 31, Leo Gomes 55, 83)
Rosario Central 1 (Aguirre 88)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Rojas (Col)

Universidad Catolica 2 (Puch 7, Saez 90+4)
Libertad 3 (Recalde 43, O Cardozo 45+1, Cardozo Lucena 84)
HT: 1-2. **Ref:** Vargas (Bol)

Apr 23
Libertad 0
Gremio 2 (Everton 29, 84)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Herrera (Ven)

Apr 24
Rosario Central 1 (Fuenzalida og 80)
Universidad Catolica 1 (Fuentes 23)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Ostojich (Uru)

May 8
Gremio 2 (Alisson 23, Thaciano 76)
Universidad Catolica 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Pitana (Arg)

Rosario Central 2 (Pereyra 20, Riano 71)
Libertad 1 (O Cardozo pen 50)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Arteaga (Ven)
Sent off: Camacho (Rosario Central) 85

LIBERTADORES CUP – GROUP H – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Libertad (Q)	6	4	0	2	11	7	12
Gremio (Q)	6	3	1	2	8	4	10
U Catolica (SC)	6	2	1	3	7	11	7
Rosario C	6	1	2	3	6	10	5

● *The top 2 in each group have qualified for the round of16; the 3rd-placed teams entered the Sudamericana Cup in the 2nd round*

Round of 16 draw

Athletico Paranaense v Boca Juniors
Emelec v Flamengo
Godoy Cruz v Palmeiras
Gremio v Libertad
LDU Quito v Olimpia
Nacional v Internacional
River Plate v Cruzeiro
San Lorenzo v Cerro Porteno
1st legs - Jul 23-25; 2nd legs - Jul 30-Aug1

SUDAMERICANA CUP

1st round (delayed tie)

1st leg - Apr 4; 2nd leg - May 8
Argentinos Juniors (Arg) v Estudiantes de Merida (Ven) 2-0, 0-1 (agg 2-1)

2nd round

10 teams from the Libertadores Cup (marked with asterisk) entered at this stage – the 8 3rd-placed teams from the group stage and the 2 losing teams with the best performance in the final qualifying round
1st legs - May 21-23; 2nd legs - May 28-30
Argentinos Juniors v Tolima* (Col) 1-0, 0-0 (agg 1-0); Corinthians (Bra) v Deportivo Lara* (Ven) 2-0, 2-0 (agg 4-0); Deportivo Cali (Col) v Penarol* (Uru) 1-1, 0-2 (agg 1-3); Fluminense (Bra) v Atletico Nacional* (Col) 4-1, 0-1 (agg 4-2); Independiente del Valle (Ecu) v Universidad Catolica* (Chl) 5-0, 2-3 (agg 7-3); La Equidad (Col) v Deportivo Santini (Par) 2-0, 2-1 (agg 4-1); Liverpool (Uru) v Caracas* (Ven) 1-0, 0-2 (agg 1-2); Montevideo Wanderers (Uru) v Cerro (Uru) 0-0, 1-0 (agg 1-0); Rionegro Aguilas (Col) v Independiente (Arg) 3-2, 0-2 (agg 3-4); River Plate (Uru) v Colon (Arg) 0-0, 1-3 (agg 1-3); Royal Pari (Bol) v Macara (Ecu) 1-0, 2-3 (agg 3-3, Royal Pari on away goals); Sol de America (Par) v Botafogo (Bra) 0-1, 0-4 (agg 0-5); Union Espanola (Chl) v Sporting Cristal* (Per) 0-3, 0-3 (agg 0-6); Union La Calera (Chl) v Atletico Mineiro* (Bra) 1-0, 0-1 (agg 1-1, Atletico Mineiro 3-0 on pens); Universidad Catolica (Ecu) v Melgar* (Per) 6-0, 0-0 (agg 6-0); Zulia (Ven) v Palestino* (Chl) 2-1, 1-0 (agg 3-1)

3rd round draw

Botafogo v Atletico Mineiro
Caracas v Independiente del Valle
Colon v Argentinos Juniors
Corinthians v Montevideo Wanderers
Independiente v Universidad Catolica (Ecu)
Penarol v Fluminense
Royal Pari v La Equidad
Zulia v Sporting Cristal
1st legs - Jul 9-25; 2nd legs - Jul16-Aug1

BOLIVIA

2019 – APERTURA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bolivar (C)	26	17	6	3	66	35	57
The Strongest	26	16	4	6	55	30	52
Nacional	26	15	5	6	44	22	50
Blooming	26	15	2	9	55	45	47
San Jose[1]	26	12	7	7	55	44	40
Wilstermann	26	12	4	10	44	37	40
Oriente	26	11	4	11	41	43	37
Guabira	26	8	7	11	31	49	31
Always Ready	26	8	6	12	50	43	30
Real Potosi	26	7	6	13	41	59	27
Royal Pari	26	6	7	13	39	55	25
Sport Boys	26	5	8	13	32	51	23
Aurora	26	6	5	15	32	52	23
Destroyers	26	5	7	14	23	43	22

[1]3pts deducted for not paying a former player on time

PARAGUAY

2019 – APERTURA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Olimpia (C)	22	16	6	0	61	17	54
C Porteno	22	13	4	5	48	25	43
Libertad	22	12	4	6	43	29	40
Guarani	22	10	7	5	37	29	37
Luqueno	22	8	7	7	28	30	31
River Plate	22	7	7	8	25	31	28
Capiata	22	6	8	8	24	32	26
Sol America	22	8	2	12	31	43	26
San Lorenzo	22	7	3	12	33	41	24
Nacional	22	5	8	9	19	27	23
General Diaz	22	3	7	12	21	42	16
Santini	22	2	7	13	15	39	13

URUGUAY

2019 – APERTURA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Penarol (Q)	15	9	4	2	27	11	31
Fenix	15	8	4	3	36	26	28
Nacional	15	7	6	2	32	17	27
Cerro Largo	15	8	3	4	23	12	27
Danubio	15	8	3	4	22	17	27
Wanderers	15	6	5	4	22	22	23
Progreso	15	6	4	5	26	25	22
Liverpool	15	5	5	5	29	29	20
Boston River	15	5	5	5	18	22	20
Rampla Jnrs	15	5	3	7	16	23	18
Defensor	15	4	4	7	21	27	16
Racing	15	4	3	8	20	30	15
Juventud	15	4	2	9	21	22	14
Plaza Colonia	15	3	5	7	15	21	14
River Plate	15	3	5	7	14	29	14
Cerro	15	3	3	9	14	23	12

As apertura winners, Penarol have qualified for the overall 2019 championship semi-final

OCEANIA

OFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Final

May11 - Noumea, New Caledonia
Magenta (NwC) 0
Hienghene Sport (NwC) 1 (Roine 66)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 7,000. **Ref:** Conger (NZ)
Magenta: Ixoee - Maitran, Gope-Iwate, Tiaou, Wadriako, Poameno (Wahnawe 80), Sele, Simane, Wajoka, Nathaniel Hmaen, Nemia.
Sent off: Tiaou 90+5.
Hienghene Sport: R Nyikeine - Yentao (Hyanem 75), R Kayara, Dinet, Ausu, Sansot, M Kayara (Bamy 84), Gony, A Kai (Roine 60), B Kai, Dahite.

AFRICA

CONFEDERATION CUP

Final

1st leg

May19
RS Berkane (Mor) 1 (Laba 90+4)
Zamalek (Egy) 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Sikazwe (Zam)
RS Berkane: M'Hamdi - Nemsaoui, Dayo, Mokadem, Yechou (Aziz 58), El Kass, Ouidar (Ouald El Haj 87), Farhane, El Helali, Laachir (Bari 90+5), Laba.
Zamalek: Salah - Nagguez, Alaa, Abdel Ghani, Gomaa, Abdel Aziz, Hamed, Zizo (I Hassan 68), Obama, Kahraba (M Ibrahim 79), El Said.

2nd leg

May 26
Zamalek 1 (Alaa pen 55)
RS Berkane 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Tessema Weyesa (Eth)
Agg1-1, Zamalek 5-3 on pens
Zamalek: Genesh - Abdel Ghani, Alaa, Hamdy, Gomaa, Hamed, M Ibrahim (Abdel Aziz 83), I Hassan (Zizo 70), Obama, Kahraba, Ahaddad (Boutaib 88).
RS Berkane: M'Hamdi - Nemsaoui, Dayo, Mokadem, Aziz, El Kass (Ouald El Haj 84), Larbi, Ouidar (Farhane 69), El Helali (Regragui 90+4), Laba, Laachir. *Sent off: Nemsaoui 90.*

FINAL TABLES: 2018-19

ALGERIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
USM Alger (C)	30	15	8	7	49	29	53
JS Kabylie	30	15	7	8	38	25	52
Paradou	30	14	6	10	38	24	48
JS Saoura	30	13	8	9	33	22	47
ES Setif	30	13	6	11	34	24	45
MC Alger	30	11	10	9	35	36	43
CS Constantine	30	10	10	10	30	24	40
CR Belouizdad[1]	30	10	11	9	28	27	38
Bordj Bou Arr'j	30	9	10	11	22	24	37
MC Oran	30	8	12	10	32	38	36
Hussein Dey	30	9	9	12	22	29	36
Ain M'lila	30	7	15	8	20	30	36
Bel Abbes	30	9	8	13	24	38	35
MO Bejaia (R)	30	7	12	11	23	36	33
Tadjenanet (R)	30	7	10	13	26	38	31
Olympiq M (R)	30	7	10	13	21	31	31

[1]3pts deducted for unpaid debts

ANGOLA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1º Agosto[1] (C)	30	20	10	0	51	9	67
Petro Atletico	30	19	7	4	40	15	64
Desp'vo Huila[1]	30	15	8	7	36	25	50
Kabuscorp	30	13	10	7	35	26	49
Interclube	30	11	11	8	27	22	44
S Esperanca	30	10	11	9	31	26	41
Progresso S'a	30	9	13	8	33	29	40
Recreativo L	30	10	9	11	31	30	39
Recreativo C	30	8	13	9	30	34	37
Bravos Maquis[2]	30	7	15	8	28	28	33
Santa Rita	30	8	8	14	32	41	32
Academica	30	7	10	13	23	29	31
Sporting Cab'a	30	6	12	12	30	43	30
Cuando C'o (R)	30	6	8	16	30	51	26
ASA (R)	30	5	11	14	26	48	26
Saurimo (R)	30	5	6	19	20	47	21

[1]3pts deducted for match-fixing
[2]3pts deducted for failing to pay a player

BOTSWANA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
T Rollers (C)	30	20	8	2	61	15	68
Galaxy	30	19	9	2	58	17	66
Orapa United	30	17	5	8	44	24	56
Police XI	30	14	11	5	45	29	53
BDF XI	30	12	10	8	35	31	46
Gaborone Utd[1]	30	12	10	8	42	31	43
Security Sys	30	11	9	10	37	35	42
Shooting Stars	30	9	10	11	36	36	37
Miscellaneous	30	9	10	11	33	44	37
Ext'n Gunners	30	9	9	12	35	41	36
BR Highlanders	30	10	6	14	33	43	36
Notwane	30	7	12	11	28	33	33
Prisons XI	30	8	5	17	29	50	29
S B'sh Bucks (R)	30	6	9	15	28	50	27
Centre Chiefs (R)	30	4	10	16	25	49	22
Black Forest (R)	30	4	5	21	20	61	17

[1]3pts deducted for failing to pay money owed to a former player

CONGO

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
AS Otoho (C)	26	20	4	2	55	9	64
Etoile Congo	26	16	6	4	46	20	54
Diables Noirs	26	13	8	5	30	19	47
JS Talangai	26	12	5	9	41	30	41
CARA	26	11	5	10	34	26	38
Tongo Jambon	26	11	3	12	28	33	36
VC Mokanda	26	10	5	11	23	29	35
Inter Club	26	10	4	12	21	28	34
Leopards	26	9	4	13	28	38	31
Cheminots	26	8	6	12	24	29	30
Nico-Nicoye	26	6	10	10	22	30	28
Kondzo	26	8	3	15	27	46	27
Patronage (R)	26	6	6	14	26	36	24
La Mancha (R)	26	4	7	15	16	48	19

DR CONGO

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
TP Mazembe (C)	30	27	2	1	82	11	83
AS Vita	30	23	5	2	60	15	74
Motema P'be	30	19	6	5	47	25	63
Maniema Union	30	17	6	7	40	23	57
Sanga Balende	30	11	9	10	36	29	42
St Eloi Lupopo	30	10	11	9	25	25	41
Dauphin Noir	30	11	7	12	29	41	40
Nyuki	30	10	8	12	28	32	38
Renaissance	30	10	8	12	28	40	38
AC Rangers	30	10	7	13	30	30	37
Don Bosco	30	9	9	12	34	36	36
Groupe Bazano	30	9	7	14	25	30	34
Lu'bashi Sport	30	8	8	14	35	42	32
Mont Bleu (R)	30	7	9	14	25	43	30
Dragons/B (R)	30	3	5	22	12	53	14
Muungano[1] (R)	30	2	1	27	10	71	7

[1]Excluded for 3 no-shows; remaining games awarded as 3-0 wins to scheduled opponents

KENYA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Gor Mahia (C)	34	21	9	4	58	25	72
Bandari	34	18	10	6	45	29	64
Sofapaka	34	16	14	4	50	30	62
Tusker	34	15	11	8	49	32	56
SoNy Sugar	34	16	8	10	41	28	56
Mathare Utd	34	14	13	7	48	35	55
K Homeboyz	34	14	10	10	47	31	52
Ulinzi Stars	34	10	15	9	36	32	45
Kari'gi Sharks	34	10	15	9	40	37	45
KCB	34	11	12	11	38	36	45
Leopards	34	11	10	13	33	39	43
Nzoia Sugar	34	9	12	13	31	36	39
Western Stima	34	8	15	11	27	37	39
Chemelil Sugar	34	8	10	16	27	41	34
Zoo Kericho	34	7	12	15	30	49	33
Posta Rangers[1]	34	7	11	16	28	36	32
Vihiga Utd (R)	34	4	14	16	27	48	26
Mt Kenya U (R)	34	5	3	26	31	85	18

[1]Enter rel/prom play-off

NAMIBIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Black Africa (C)	28	19	7	2	66	22	64
African Stars	28	16	6	6	40	23	54
Tura Magic	28	12	11	5	40	31	47
UNAM	28	11	9	8	42	30	42
Life Fighters	28	12	5	11	45	43	41
Mighty Gunn'rs	28	11	7	10	34	31	40
Citizens	28	9	12	7	36	32	39
Eleven Arrows	28	9	9	10	33	33	36
Tigers	28	9	8	11	37	29	35
Julinho Sport'g	28	10	5	13	31	49	35
Blue Waters	28	8	6	14	26	41	30
Okahandja Utd	28	6	11	11	27	32	29
Yng Brazilians	28	7	8	13	41	62	29
Civics (R)	28	7	7	14	27	41	28
Orlando P (R)	28	6	5	17	22	48	23

RWANDA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rayon Sp (C)	30	23	3	4	53	14	72
APR	30	20	5	5	47	17	65
Mukura	30	17	8	5	38	22	59
Police	30	15	5	10	45	33	50
Kiyovu Sports	30	12	7	11	31	21	43
Espoir	30	11	7	12	33	41	40
AS Kigali	30	9	12	9	38	30	39
Etincelles	30	11	4	15	25	29	37
Muhanga	30	9	9	12	41	41	36
Musanze	30	10	6	14	26	38	36
Marines	30	8	11	11	20	24	35
Bugesera	30	8	11	11	30	42	35
Sunrise	30	8	10	12	28	35	34
Gicumbi	30	8	7	15	20	43	31
Kirehe (R)	30	6	9	15	17	38	27
Amagaju (R)	30	5	6	19	22	46	21

SENEGAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Generation F (C)	26	13	12	1	43	18	51
Jaraaf	26	10	11	5	28	17	41
Dakar SC	26	8	14	4	26	21	38
AS Douanes	26	10	7	9	24	24	37
Pikine	26	8	12	6	28	24	36
Teungueth	26	9	9	8	28	29	36
Stade Mbour	26	7	12	7	21	24	33
Casa Sport	26	6	14	6	23	20	32
Goree	26	7	11	8	31	29	32
Ndiambour	26	7	11	8	29	28	32
M Petite Cote	26	7	10	9	24	27	31
Niarry Tally	26	7	10	9	22	27	31
La Linguere (R)	26	5	9	12	20	33	24
Sonacos (R)	26	4	6	16	15	41	18

SOUTH AFRICA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Mamelodi S (C)	30	16	11	3	40	24	59
Orlando P'tes	30	15	12	3	44	24	57
Bidvest Wits	30	16	6	8	45	29	54
Cape Town C	30	13	9	8	47	35	48
Polokwane	30	11	11	8	38	35	44
SuperSport	30	12	8	10	29	29	44
Highlands P	30	9	14	7	35	32	41
Bloemfontein	30	11	7	12	35	37	40
Kaizer Chiefs	30	9	12	9	33	29	39
Gold Arrows	30	8	12	10	27	31	36
AmaZulu[1]	30	10	7	13	33	41	31
Chippa Utd	30	7	9	14	27	35	30
B Leopards	30	7	9	14	30	46	30
Baroka	30	6	11	13	27	37	29
Maritzburg[2]	30	6	9	15	22	32	27
Free State S (R)	30	6	9	15	31	47	27

[1]6pts deducted for defying a FIFA ruling re a player employment dispute [2]Stay in top division after winning rel/prom play-off group

ASIA

AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Group A

Mar 4: Al Wasl (UAE) 1 Al Nassr (Sau) 0; Zob Ahan (Irn) 0 Al Zawra'a (Irq) 0.
Mar 11: Al Nassr 2 Zob Ahan 3; Al Zawra'a 5 Al Wasl 0.
Apr 8: Al Nassr 4 Al Zawra'a 1; Al Wasl 1 Zob Ahan 3.
Apr 23: Al Zawra'a 1 Al Nassr 2; Zob Ahan 2 Al Wasl 0.
May 7: Al Nassr 3 Al Wasl 1; Al Zawra'a 2 Zob Ahan 2.
May 21: Al Wasl 1 Al Zawra'a 5.
May 29: Zob Ahan 0 Al Nassr 0.

AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP A – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Zob Ahan (Q)	6	3	3	0	10	5	12
Al Nassr (Q)	6	3	1	2	11	7	10
Al Zawra'a	6	2	2	2	14	9	8
Al Wasl	6	1	0	5	4	18	3

Group B

Mar 4: Al Ittihad (Sau) 5 Al Rayyan (Qat) 1; Lokomotiv Tashkent (Uzb) 2 Al Wahda (UAE) 0.
Mar 11: Al Rayyan 2 Lokomotiv Tashkent 1; Al Wahda 4 Al Ittihad 1.
Apr 9: Al Ittihad 3 Lokomotiv Tashkent 2; Al Rayyan 1 Al Wahda 2.
Apr 22: Al Wahda 4 Al Rayyan 3; Lokomotiv Tashkent 1 Al Ittihad 1.
May 7: Al Rayyan 0 Al Ittihad 2; Al Wahda 3 Lokomotiv Tashkent 1.
May 21: Al Ittihad 1 Al Wahda 1; Lokomotiv Tashkent 3 Al Rayyan 2.

AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP B – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Al Wahda (Q)	6	4	1	1	14	9	13
Al Ittihad (Q)	6	3	2	1	13	9	11
Lokomotiv T	6	2	1	3	10	11	7
Al Rayyan	6	1	0	5	9	17	3

Group C

Mar 5: Al Ain (UAE) 0 Al Hilal (Sau) 1; Al Duhail (Qat) 3 Esteghlal Tehran (Irn) 0.
Mar 12: Al Hilal 3 Al Duhail 1; Esteghlal Tehran 1 Al Ain 1.
Apr 8: Al Duhail 2 Al Ain 2; Esteghlal Tehran 2 Al Hilal 1.
Apr 23: Al Ain 0 Al Duhail 2; Al Hilal 1 Esteghlal Tehran 0.
May 6: Al Hilal 2 Al Ain 0; Esteghlal Tehran 1 Al Duhail 1.
May 20: Al Ain 1 Esteghlal Tehran 2; Al Duhail 2 Al Hilal 2.

AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP C – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Al Hilal (Q)	6	4	1	1	10	5	13
Al Duhail (Q)	6	2	3	1	11	8	9
Esteghlal T	6	2	2	2	6	8	8
Al Ain	6	0	2	4	4	10	2

Group D

Mar 5: Al Ahli (Sau) 2 Al Sadd (Qat) 0; Persepolis (Irn) 1 Pakhtakor (Uzb) 1.
Mar 12: Al Sadd 1 Persepolis 0; Pakhtakor 1 Al Ahli 0.
Apr 9: Pakhtakor 2 Al Sadd 2; Persepolis 2 Al Ahli 0.
Apr 22: Al Ahli 2 Persepolis 1; Al Sadd 2 Pakhtakor 1.
May 6: Al Sadd 2 Al Ahli 1; Pakhtakor 1 Persepolis 0.
May 20: Al Ahli 2 Pakhtakor 1; Persepolis 2 Al Sadd 0.

AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP D – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Al Sadd (Q)	6	3	1	2	7	8	10
Al Ahli (Q)	6	3	0	3	7	7	9
Pakhtakor	6	2	2	2	7	7	8
Persepolis	6	2	1	3	6	5	7

Group E

Mar 5: Gyeongnam (SKo) 2 Shandong Luneng (Chn) 2; Kashima Antlers (Jap) 2 Johor Darul Ta'zim (Mly) 1.
Mar 12: Johor Darul Ta'zim 1 Gyeongnam 1; Shandong Luneng 2 Kashima Antlers 2.
Apr 9: Gyeongnam 2 Kashima Antlers 3; Shandong Luneng 2 Johor Darul Ta'zim 1.
Apr 24: Johor Darul Ta'zim 0 Shandong Luneng 1; Kashima Antlers 0 Gyeongnam 1.
May 8: Johor Darul Ta'zim 1 Kashima Antlers 0; Shandong Luneng 2 Gyeongnam 1.
May 22: Gyeongnam 2 Johor Darul Ta'zim 0; Kashima Antlers 2 Shandong Luneng 1.

AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP E – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Shandong L (Q)	6	3	2	1	10	8	11
Kashima A (Q)	6	3	1	2	9	8	10
Gyeongnam	6	2	2	2	9	8	8
Johor Darul T	6	1	1	4	4	8	4

Group F

Mar 5: Guangzhou Evergrande (Chn) 2 Sanfrecce Hiroshima (Jap) 0; Melbourne Victory (Aus) 1 Daegu (SKo) 3.
Mar 12: Daegu 3 Guangzhou Evergrande 1; Sanfrecce Hiroshima 2 Melbourne Victory 1.
Apr 10: Guangzhou Evergrande 4 Melbourne Victory 0; Sanfrecce Hiroshima 2 Daegu 0.
Apr 23: Daegu 0 Sanfrecce Hiroshima 1; Melbourne Victory 1 Guangzhou Evergrande 1.
May 8: Daegu 4 Melbourne Victory 0; Sanfrecce Hiroshima 1 Guangzhou Evergrande 0.
May 22: Guangzhou Evergrande 1 Daegu 0; Melbourne Victory 1 Sanfrecce Hiroshima 3.

AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP F – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sanfrecce (Q)	6	5	0	1	9	4	15
Guangzhou (Q)	6	3	1	2	9	5	10
Daegu	6	3	0	3	10	6	9
Melbourne V	6	0	1	5	4	17	1

Group G

Mar 6: Jeonbuk Motors (SKo) 3 Beijing Guoan (Chn) 1; Urawa Red Diamonds (Jap) 3 Buriram United (Tha) 0.
Mar 13: Beijing Guoan 0 Urawa Red Diamonds 0; Buriram United 1 Jeonbuk Motors 0.
Apr 9: Buriram United 1 Beijing Guoan 3; Urawa Red Diamonds 0 Jeonbuk Motors 1.
Apr 24: Beijing Guoan 2 Buriram United 0; Jeonbuk Motors 2 Urawa Red Diamonds 1.
May 7: Beijing Guoan 0 Jeonbuk Motors 1; Buriram United 1 Urawa Red Diamonds 2.
May 21: Jeonbuk Motors 0 Buriram United 0; Urawa Red Diamonds 3 Beijing Guoan 0.

AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP G – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Jeonbuk (Q)	6	4	1	1	7	3	13
Urawa Reds (Q)	6	3	1	2	9	4	10
Beijing Guoan	6	2	1	3	6	8	7
Buriram Utd	6	1	1	4	3	10	4

Group H

Mar 6: Shanghai SIPG (Chn) 1 Kawasaki Frontale (Jap) 0; Sydney (Aus) 0 Ulsan Hyundai (SKo) 0.
Mar 13: Kawasaki Frontale 1 Sydney 0; Ulsan Hyundai 1 Shanghai SIPG 0.
Apr 10: Sydney 3 Shanghai SIPG 3; Ulsan Hyundai 1 Kawasaki Frontale 0.

Apr 23: Kawasaki Frontale 2 Ulsan 2; Shanghai SIPG 2 Sydney 2.
May 7: Kawasaki Frontale 2 Shanghai SIPG 2; Ulsan Hyundai 1 Sydney 0.
May 21: Shanghai SIPG 5 Ulsan Hyundai 0; Sydney 0 Kawasaki Frontale 4.

AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP H – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ulsan (Q)	6	3	2	1	5	7	11
S'hai SIPG (Q)	6	2	3	1	13	8	9
Kawasaki	6	2	2	2	9	6	8
Sydney	6	0	3	3	5	11	3

● *The top 2 in each group have qualified for the round of16*

Round of 16 draw

Al Ahli v Al Hilal
Al Duhail v Al Sadd
Al Ittihad v Zob Ahan
Al Nassr v Al Wahda
Guangzhou Evergrande v Shandong Luneng
Kashima Antlers v Sanfrecce Hiroshima
Shanghai SIPG v Jeonbuk Motors
Urawa Red Diamonds v Ulsan Hyundai
1st legs -Jun18-Aug 6; 2nd legs -Jun 25-Aug13

FINAL TABLES: 2018-19

AUSTRALIA

REGULAR SEASON	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Perth (Q)	27	18	6	3	56	23	60
Sydney (Q)	27	16	4	7	43	29	52
Melb'rne V (Q)	27	15	5	7	50	32	50
Adelaide (Q)	27	12	8	7	37	32	44
Melb'rne C (Q)	27	11	7	9	39	32	40
Well'ton P (Q)	27	11	7	9	46	43	40
Newcastle	27	10	5	12	40	36	35
West'n Sydney	27	6	6	15	42	54	24
Brisbane	27	4	6	17	38	71	18
Central Coast	27	3	4	20	31	70	13

The top 6 qualified for the championship play-offs (the top 2 went directly into the semi-finals)

Elimination finals

May 3: Melbourne Victory 3 Wellington Phoenix 1.
May 5: Adelaide United 1 Melbourne City 0 (aet).

Semi-finals

May 10: Perth Glory 3 Adelaide United 3 (aet, Perth Glory 5-4 on pens).
May 12: Sydney 6 Melbourne Victory 1.

2018-19 Championship Final

May 19: Perth Glory 0 Sydney 0 (aet, Sydney 4-1 on pens).

HONG KONG

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Tai Po (C)	18	12	5	1	43	22	41
R&F	18	11	3	4	51	26	36
Southern	18	9	5	4	30	24	32
Kitchee	18	9	5	4	44	20	32
Eastern SC	18	8	7	3	38	21	31
Pegasus	18	6	4	8	34	33	22
Yuen Long	18	4	6	8	36	37	18
Dreams	18	4	4	10	29	53	16
Lee Man	18	2	5	11	12	36	11
Hoi King (R)	18	2	2	14	13	58	8

IRAN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Persepolis (C)	30	16	13	1	36	14	61
Sepahan	30	15	13	2	46	20	58
Esteghlal T	30	16	9	5	40	13	57
Padideh	30	16	8	6	32	16	56
Tractor Sazi	30	14	10	6	42	25	52
Zob Ahan	30	9	13	8	28	28	40
Saipa	30	9	11	10	28	33	38
Foolad	30	9	11	10	30	39	38
Sanat Naft	30	7	16	7	31	30	37
Nassaji	30	7	15	8	29	29	36
Paykan	30	9	8	13	27	35	35
Pars Jonoubi	30	7	9	14	28	33	30
Machine Sazi	30	4	17	9	19	26	29
Naft MS	30	3	13	14	16	34	22
Sepidrood (R)	30	3	11	16	24	53	20
Esteghlal K[1] (R)	30	3	9	18	19	47	12

[1]6pts deducted for not paying wages

JORDAN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Al Faisaly (C)	22	15	5	2	39	15	50
Al Jazeera	22	15	4	3	41	15	49
Al Wehdat	22	13	4	5	36	16	43
Shabab Ordon	22	11	6	5	30	21	39
Al Salt	22	8	9	5	23	21	33
Shabab Aqaba	22	7	6	9	27	28	27
Al Sareeh	22	7	5	10	17	29	26
Al Ramtha	22	6	5	11	26	30	23
Al Hussein	22	7	2	13	22	38	23
Al Ahli	22	6	4	12	16	31	22
Al Baqa'a (R)	22	5	6	11	24	30	21
That Ras (R)	22	1	6	15	12	39	9

KUWAIT

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Kuwait SC (C)	18	13	3	2	52	14	42
Al Qadsia	18	11	3	4	34	15	36
Al Salmiya	18	9	6	3	31	23	33
Kazma	18	7	7	4	30	24	28
Al Arabi	18	7	6	5	27	24	27
Al Naser	18	4	6	8	16	26	18
Al Tadhamon	18	4	5	9	18	27	17
Al Shabab	18	4	4	10	18	39	16
Al Jahra (R)	18	4	3	11	16	29	15
Al Fahaheel (R)	18	2	7	9	21	42	13

PALESTINE (West Bank)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Hilal Quds (C)	22	13	6	3	49	19	45
Sh'b Al Khalil	22	13	5	4	29	18	44
Markaz Balata	22	13	4	5	38	21	43
Alsamu	22	10	5	7	41	32	35
Ahli Al Khalil	22	10	5	7	28	20	35
Taraji WAN	22	10	4	8	32	27	34
Al Bireh	22	9	4	9	33	35	31
Thaqafi	22	8	6	8	24	27	30
Jabal Mukabar	22	7	3	12	24	34	24
Al Am'ari	22	7	3	12	21	33	24
Al Dahiriya (R)	22	3	6	13	15	33	15
Markaz T (R)	22	2	3	17	11	46	9

SAUDI ARABIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Al Nassr (C)	30	22	4	4	69	27	70
Al Hilal	30	21	6	3	66	33	69
Al Taawoun	30	16	8	6	61	31	56
Al Ahli	30	17	4	9	68	41	55
Al Shabab	30	15	9	6	39	25	54
Al Faisaly	30	12	7	11	51	47	43
Al Wehda	30	12	6	12	41	41	42
Al Raed	30	10	8	12	38	48	38
Al Fateh	30	8	11	11	32	45	35
Al Ittihad	30	9	7	14	44	45	34
Al Ettifaq	30	8	9	13	40	55	33
Al Fayha	30	9	5	16	36	52	32
Al Hazem[1]	30	7	10	13	33	50	31
Al Qadisiyah (R)	30	8	4	18	34	51	28
Al Batin (R)	30	7	4	19	29	53	25
Ohod (R)	30	5	6	19	25	62	21

[1]Stay in top division after winning rel/prom play-off

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Al Sharjah (C)	26	17	8	1	57	30	59
Sha'b Al Ahli	26	17	2	7	57	36	53
Al Wahda	26	14	4	8	63	40	46
Al Ain	26	14	4	8	45	35	46
Al Jazira	26	13	6	7	66	41	45
Baniyas	26	11	7	8	50	40	40
Ajman	26	10	7	9	41	40	37
Al Nasr	26	10	6	10	42	41	36
Al Wasl	26	10	4	12	45	54	34
Al Dhafra	26	8	5	13	37	49	29
Kalba	26	5	10	11	41	51	25
Fujairah FC	26	5	6	15	36	63	21
Emirates (R)	26	4	6	16	30	62	18
Dibba Fuj'h (R)	26	4	5	17	34	62	17

CONCACAF

BAHAMAS

2018-19 Championship Final

Apr 28: Dynamos 5 Cavalier 1.

BELIZE

2018-19 Closing Final

1st leg - May11; 2nd leg - May18
Belmopan Bandits v San Pedro Pirates
1-0, 0-2 (agg 1-2)

COSTA RICA

2018-19 Clausura Play-offs Final

1st leg - May12; 2nd leg - May15
Saprissa v San Carlos
1-1, 0-0 (agg 1-1, San Carlos on away goals)
San Carlos are clausura champions as they also topped the clausura regular-season table

CUBA

2019 Championship Final

1st leg - May11; 2nd leg - May18
La Habana v Santiago de Cuba
3-2, 0-1 (agg 3-3, Santiago on away goals)

EL SALVADOR

2018-19 Clausura Final

May 26: Alianza 0 Aguila 0 (aet, Aguila 3-1 on pens).

GUATEMALA

2018-19 Clausura Final

1st leg - May 23; 2nd leg - May 26
Malacateco v Antigua GFC 0-1, 0-1 (agg 0-2)

HONDURAS

2018-19 Clausura Final

1st leg - May 26; 2nd leg -Jun 2
Motagua v Olimpia 2-2, 1-0 (agg 3-2)

MEXICO

2018-19 – CLAUSURA: REGULAR – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Leon (Q)	17	13	2	2	41	14	41
Tigres (Q)	17	11	4	2	33	16	37
Monterrey (Q)	17	8	6	3	33	21	30
Cruz Azul (Q)	17	8	6	3	26	15	30
America (Q)	17	9	2	6	28	19	29
Necaxa (Q)	17	8	5	4	32	24	29
Pachuca (Q)	17	8	4	5	32	26	28
Tijuana (Q)	17	9	1	7	25	20	28
Toluca	17	7	4	6	28	23	25
Puebla	17	6	6	5	18	21	24
Santos	17	6	4	7	21	23	22
Lobos	17	6	2	9	17	34	20
Atlas	17	6	1	10	19	28	19
Guadalajara	17	5	3	9	16	21	18
Pumas	17	4	5	8	19	26	17
Morelia	17	2	7	8	20	31	13
Queretaro	17	3	2	12	11	30	11
Veracruz[1] (R)[2]	17	0	4	13	7	34	0

The top 8 qualified for the quarter-finals
[1]6pts deducted for failing to pay fees due for use of a player (a total of zero points is shown as minus points are not recognised)
[2]Relegation decided by points-per-game average over the 3 most recent seasons

Quarter-finals

1st legs - May 8/9; 2nd legs - May11/12
America v Cruz Azul 3-1, 0-1 (agg 3-2)
Necaxa v Monterrey 1-0, 0-1 (agg 1-1,
Monterrey on better regular-season record)
Pachuca v Tigres 1-1, 1-1 (agg 2-2,
Tigres on better regular-season record)
Tijuana v Leon 1-3, 1-2 (agg 2-5)

Semi-finals

1st legs - May15/16; 2nd legs - May18/19
America v Leon 0-1, 1-0 (agg 1-1,
Leon on better regular-season record)
Monterrey v Tigres 1-0, 0-1 (agg 1-1,
Tigres on better regular-seaon record)

2018-19 Clausura Final

1st leg - May 23; 2nd leg - May 26
Tigres v Leon 1-0, 0-0 (agg 1-0)

NICARAGUA

2018-19 Clausura Final

1st leg - May 25; 2nd leg -Jun1
Managua v Real Esteli 3-3, 0-0
(agg 3-3, Real Esteli on away goals)

PANAMA

2018-19 Clausura Final

Jun 1: San Francisco 1 CAI 1 (aet, CAI 4-1 on pens).

KEY TO TABLES
(C) = champions
(R) = relegated
(Q) = qualified for next stage
(SC) = entered Sudamericana Cup

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ipso. Regulated

Confrontational...Marseille (in white) and PSG last clashed in March this year

PARIS SAINT-GERMAIN v MARSEILLE

It may be a fairly recent phenomenon, but Le Classique is an old-school grudge game

Ligue 1 winners for six of the past seven years, Paris Saint-Germain may dominate domestically these days, but in spite of the millions of petrodollars pumped into the capital club by its Qatari owners, it is Marseille who still remain the only French side to have claimed the title PSG want above all else: that of champions of Europe.

And it is this burning desire to emulate OM's continental success that drives PSG on and heightens the antipathy between the two clubs.

With PSG only forming in 1970, the rivalry did not begin until the 1980s. But as representatives of the country's two biggest cities, it did not take long for the fixture to ignite. North versus south, capital against province; *Le Classique* has many great cultural and social connotations – as well as being a grudge match between the past and present giants of the Gallic game.

Huge investment has seen big-name coaches such as Franz Beckenbauer (OM) grace the French league, along with global superstars such as Ronaldinho and Neymar (PSG). But in Marseille's case, chasing their dream came at a heavy cost.

In the wake of the 1-0 victory over Milan in the 1993 Champions League Final, the club's financial irregularities and a match-fixing scandal saw Marseille stripped of their 1993 Ligue 1 title, relegated to Ligue 2 and denied the right to defend their European crown.

Fears for now that big-spending PSG might face sanctions of their own for financial misconduct subsided this March when CAS dismissed allegations of breaches of UEFA's Financial Fair Play regulations. WS

Past glories...Didier Deschamps (right) of Marseille in 1991

ON BOTH SIDES

CLAUDE MAKELELE	GEORGE WEAH	GABRIEL HEINZE	HATEM BEN ARFA	LASSANA DIARRA
1997-98	1992-95	2001-04	2008-11	2015-17
2008-11	2000-01	2009-11	2016-18	2018-19

CLASSIC ENCOUNTERS

1971 Dec 2
The first meeting comes just over a year after PSG were formed and Marseille win 4-2.

1989 May 5
With three games left to play, PSG are drawing 0-0 in Marseille and look on course to win the title – until Franck Sauzee scores for the hosts in injury time to set them on their way to a first league championship since 1972.

1993 May 29
Newly crowned champions of Europe, Marseille add the Ligue 1 crown with a 3-1 victory over their closest challengers.

2006 Apr 29
PSG win the French Cup with a 2-1 victory in the Final.

2019 Mar 17
PSG's 3-1 victory means they now lead 42-32, with 22 draws, and Marseille haven't beaten their great rivals since November 2011.

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